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# Warwick of the Knobs









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SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION

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# Warwick of the Knobs

*A Story of Stringtown County, Kentucky*

By

John Uri Lloyd

Author of "Stringtown on the Pike,"

"Etidorhpa," "The Right Side  
of the Car," etc.



*With Photographic Illustrations  
of the Knob Country*

NEW YORK  
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## P R E F A C E

REPEATED and persistent questionings concerning the section of our country introduced by these Stringtown Novels must be the author's justification for the following somewhat personal ascription. This land is not, as many persons suppose, a creation of the imagination. It is as real as boyhood home can be to the man whose nearest and dearest ties of love and kinship have ever been therein. The scenes are laid in picturesque Boone (Stringtown) County, Kentucky, where are to be found exceptionally fertile soil, magnificent scenery, and features of rare interest to historians as well as to naturalists, some of which may be briefly noted.

Passing from Cincinnati down the gorge that marks the great bend in the Ohio River, we reach the glacier cliffs known as "Knobley" and "Split

Rock," which, below Petersburg, lie on the Kentucky side of the river adjacent to the mouth of Woolper Creek. It was here that the buffalo roads from the north and the west crossed the Ohio, and here, near this famous paradise of the red hunter, the Indians were lying in ambush the ill-fated day in 1781 that the massacre of Colonel Loughrey and his troops took place. From Knobley to Hamilton, Kentucky, the Ohio runs practically south. Between these points, to the west, lie the rugged hills or knobs (Warwick's country) in and among which flow Middlecreek, Gunpowder and Big Bone creeks, their branches all heading in the high interior ridge, along the crest of which runs the Lexington and Covington (Stringtown) pike. This formation is all of fossil limestone. Against these knobs the Arctic glaciers expended their energies, and to a distance of from three to six miles inland may be found glacier débris, often on the very top of the heights. Thus it is that granite boulders and gravel from the far north overlies the uplifted native formation, while above the bases of some of the knobs, in the sands that possibly formed the shore of the ancient ocean, lie extensive beds of coprolites,

some of enormous size, telling the story of gigantic prehistoric reptilian life.

Long after these time-lost periods, possibly contemporary with the mound-builders, who subsequently lived, reared their clay monuments and died, but left no written word, this land became the home of the mastodon. That is shown by the bones found in the quagmire or jelly ground of Big Bone Springs, where, in the heart of the knobs, the great beasts were entrapped by the bottomless mud, to perish. And it may be added that in early settler days such bone relics were also abundantly scattered over the surface of the ground about these famed saline sulphur waters. That these historic knobs and bottom-lands were the scenes of the battles between the Indian tribes is affirmed by the many battle-field burial-places thereabout, concerning which the grave-covered top of Mount Pisgah overlooking Gunpowder Creek, and the cemeteries in the valley below and elsewhere, speak volumes that are the more impressive by reason of their tantalizing silence.

This fascinating land, in which is crushed so much of life and action, so much to hold the mind of one who likes to ponder the past, seems to

have been predestined to passion, turmoil and struggle. The stone-cast evidences of Nature's convulsions, the fossil relics touching mighty forms of prehistoric life, the deeds of savage valor suggested by the Indian name of the country, the struggles of the white pioneers and settlers, the part its people have taken in statesmanship and in war—these and other things that we need not name to the reader of *Warwick of the Knobs* are the record which this highland that lies between the North and the South bears engraved in its soil, its rocks, its traditions, legends and people's hearts.

Of necessity, however, the story of Warwick utilizes only such of these features, both natural and historical, as can be touched without weighting it with scientific details or other technicalities; for a work which has for its direct object the picturing of human life and incident cannot do more than excite a thirst for such knowledge.

To persons who may be directly interested in historical events, social conditions and the local scenes presented or involved, the author ventures to suggest a personal journey to the section where the novels are laid. It should, however, be re-



membered that the incidents depicted in this story of Warwick are drawn from those momentous times forty years ago, when in this section of our country fact needs but be slightly, and often not at all, disguised, in order that it may parade as fiction.

To the foregoing, which so imperfectly describes the home of the "Stringtown Novels," the author finds it essential to add a word concerning the creed of the personage whose name gives the title to this volume. In this direction also it must be confessed that only the most cursory touch is possible, certainly nothing need be added concerning the lesson to be drawn from his life and action. And yet, increasing interest in the *faith* of Warwick leads the author to feel that a few formal words may be of service.

In Kentucky fifty years ago the religious sect to which Warwick belonged was an influential body of frugal, industrious citizens of unimpeachable integrity. Although in numbers the organization dwindled as the years passed, the zeal and the faith of its membership, their devotion, their reliance on the Bible as they interpret its precepts, their faith and honesty, are as strong to-day as in

the past. Be it added, however, that decreasing numbers give them little concern and no alarm, for, as they accept, "if such is, it is because God has so elected."

If one have any spirit of toleration, and will reflect over the exemplary conduct of those "Old School or Bible Baptists," their uncompromising perseverance and their determined aggressiveness in behalf of God's law as interpreted by themselves, their steadfast faith in the midst of trials which can never become grievous enough to disturb their religious fervor, will be seen to stand to them a living monument and before others an enduring object lesson.

The distinguishing religious title preferred by Warwick's people was and yet is "Old School, Predestinarian, or Bible Baptist," but other names both offensive and cruel are freely and thoughtlessly bestowed upon them by careless or unfriendly outsiders. Among the titles recorded are Old School Baptists, Primitive Baptists, Old Virginia Baptists, Anti-Means Baptists, Bible Baptists, Hard-Shell Baptists, Iron-Side Baptists, Foreordination Baptists and Predestinarian Baptists.

In Warwick's day his sect was alert and aggressive, being especially opposed to the "Missionary Baptists," an organization that at first was a dissenting fragment of their own people. The manner in which they handled these and all related sects is shown by a typical editorial note which is here quoted from "The Signs of the Times," 1837:

"At the present moment we have among us, bearing the Baptist name, those who hold nearly every sentiment which has been esteemed heterodox and corrupt by the Baptists of past ages, Baptists who, like the gods of old, have come newly up. Witness the Seventh-Day Baptists, the Free-Will Baptists, the General or Open Communion Baptists, the General Atonement Baptists, the Fullerite Baptists, the Campbellite Baptists, with many other kinds, whose sentiments are as discordant and confused as that of their more ancient brethren, the builders of Babel."

The author feels justified in emphasizing the fact that Warwick's people refuse to accept outside money for the church. They oppose Sunday-schools, Sunday contributions, revivals and prayer meetings; they do not tolerate the solicit-

ing of funds for any purpose whatever connected with man's salvation, and they take no donations for furthering religion or to convert the heathen, a rock that is largely responsible for splitting from them the Free-Will or Missionary Baptists. Indeed, they are particularly opposed to mission work, believing that interference with the religions of other people and nations in the face of God's Word as they view it concerning predestination, is not only futile but wicked. While in Warwick's day his people were much given to doctrinal discussions, the author has in these pages carefully avoided all controversy or retort other than in the interview between Warwick and an outsider, Judge Elford, his aim in this direction being simply to picture stubborn Elder Warwick's theological doctrine and mode of life as shown by his own deportment in the face of trials which might well test the faith of any man, but which the author hopes he endured as becomes the duty of such as hold his faith. And in this connection the author takes exceptional pleasure in frankly thanking the members of the Old School Baptist Church for voluntarily placing at his command an abundance of editorials, sermons, life

histories and other prints concerning their sect which very materially fortify his previously formed views concerning a people to whom religion is not a pastime, a people whose sterling worth even to those opposed to their theological doctrine stands engraved in the hearts of all who know them.

J. U. L.





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\* *The photographic scenes are by*  
*Mrs. John Uri Lloyd*





# WARWICK OF THE KNOBS

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HOUSE OF WARWICK.

HIGH upon one of the knobs of Stringtown County stood the home of Preacher Warwick. One would have to go far to find a more picturesque situation. Whichever way one looked there was something to charm the eye—a knob or a hillside, a valley, a gulch or a glen. To an artist or a poet the scene would have been a delight and an inspiration, but to Warwick it was nothing. From childhood the panorama had been before him. These hills and valleys, these woodlands, creeks, bluffs and stone croppings were commonplace to one reared as he had been in a house on the uplifted knob that commanded a view of the distant Ohio hills on the far north, the

Indiana bluffs to the southwest, the great ridge upland that bisects Kentucky on the east, and a horizon bounded everywhere by objects miles and miles away in the hazy distance.

In this home Warwick, large and muscular, a stalwart specimen of manhood, sat one afternoon. Before him there was a worn leather-backed Bible, the Bible that had come down to him through the hands of three generations of Warwicks. He was studying intently the page that had gladdened the eyes of his father and his father's father, and of that father's father; that had comforted many weary hearts in the day when the pioneers of Kentucky needed consolation such as could come from no other source. When the Virginia colonists marched and fought with Washington in the dark days of the Revolution, that book had been a solace to a Warwick, and even before, it had been treasured by a Warwick who served in the old French wars.

On the opposite side of the room from Warwick sat his daughter, a girl of barely seventeen years, presenting in her timid gentleness a striking contrast to his harsh and stern character. Hers was a strangely attractive face, framed in

ringlets of hair which hung down to her shoulders.

The daughter seemed as much absorbed in her own thoughts as Warwick was intent upon his study of the Word. From time to time, however, she raised her eyes, looking toward her father almost beseechingly. But not once did Warwick give her a glance in response. At length she crossed the room and stood before him, but he still kept his eyes upon the page of the book. Hesitatingly and with a timid uncertainty of movement, the girl dropped on her knees by his side, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Father, forgive me for disturbing you now, but I have been waiting long."

"What is it, daughter?"

"Father, it has been six years since mother died, six years to-night."

The man closed his book. "Six years since she passed into eternal life, my child."

"The years have been long to me, father; they grow more lonesome as they pass."

"This should not be. Think of all that you have to be thankful for— Have you felt the need of food or clothing?"

"No."

"Of warmth in winter?"

"No, father."

"Has any one been trying your patience? Has your brother worried or annoyed you?"

She shook her head.

"You have been spared sickness."

"All that is true, father, and yet I am very lonesome."

"My daughter," said Warwick coldly, "six days in the week have you to spend in study, reading, recreation; you have food in plenty, clothes for comfort; a loving brother, a watchful father, and, best of all, twice each month the chance to go to meeting and hear the blessed word of God."

"Were my mother living, would she have said: 'This is all my daughter needs?' Would—" the girl hesitated and then continued: "May I speak, my father?"

The face of the man grew stern. "Go on, child."

"Would it be wrong for me to tell you of a dream that came to me night before last?"

"Tell it, child. Neither good nor harm can come from dreams."

"I dreamed that my mother came to my side while, looking at a pleasure party, I stood in the path near the creek road. She appeared as she did when I was young and she was well. Her cheeks were red and she was smiling. She seemed to be speaking to me and to be asking: 'Why is my daughter not with the young people?' " The girl stopped suddenly, and looked into her father's face.

"And you replied?"

"That it was wicked to frolic and dance and sing songs, such as these young people sang."

"Right, my child. And then?"

"May I tell you? My father, you will not be out of patience with me for repeating the words that mother seemed to be saying in the dream?"

"Go on, a dream is but a dream."

The girl lowered her voice and glanced about timidly.

"She said: 'Say to your father that the passing of these young people will mark the beginning of his afflictions, unless he makes his God lovable, his religion enjoyable, his daughter's pleasure and happiness a part of his thought; unless he lets her laugh and sing with young people such as

these. Say to your father that he fears too much the devil—' "

"Stop," said Warwick. His voice, deep and hoarse, rang through the room. The girl, in affright, shrank back.

"Forgive me, my father. It was only the dream."

"Say no more, for no more will I hear."

"The dream is gone, my father, and so are the roses in my mother's cheeks. But the following day, the day after the dream, came the young people I had seen, the very same wagon, the same faces, the very boys and girls, who had been laughing and singing. But perhaps it was only chance." Then abruptly she changed the subject.

"I am very lonely, my father. Would it be wrong for me to see some things outside these knobs?"

"Did I not send you to boarding-school?"

"There were many girls in school, only girls. It was only on Sunday mornings that we could leave the grounds, and then a teacher led our line, and a teacher close followed it. We walked to church, two and two, and then back to the school; it is better to live in the knobs than to be watched as if one could not be trusted."

A shadow and a frown came over her father's face.

"Have you any other grievance?" he asked coldly.

Rising and clasping her hands, the girl looked him full in the face.

"Father, these things that I have mentioned are not grievances. I long for change of scene, for the company of other young folks. I wish to act like other girls, to be one of many. I crave to go to a dance, to the Stringtown Fair, to a circus. Is it wrong to wear a ribbon in my hair, or a bright dress? Does not the wild bird, fresh from God's hand, sing? In our thickets are blue, and yellow, and even cardinal red birds; did not God make them bright in feathers, and—"

"My daughter," interrupted Warwick, "the artful devil has many methods to catch the unwary. Beware of the frivolities of youth. Shame comes at last to such as these."

"Please listen to me, father. Yesterday, when that wagon, filled with girls, and a troupe of young men on horseback passed in the road below us, one of the girls looked toward where I stood, and then the others glanced at me; the wagon stopped

and a young man rode to the path and drew his horse beside me."

"And what did he say?" asked Warwick, leaning over and scanning her face closely.

"He asked me to join the party. He said that they were going to Big Bone Springs for a picnic, that there was room in the wagon, and that they would see me safely home."

"And you?"

"I told him I could not go, because you, my father, do not approve of such things. But that day was very dreary to me, and to-day is more than lonesome. Last night I dreamed again of the faces in the wagon, and in my dreams it was not my mother that came, but the young man. I dreamed that I, too, was laughing and singing and in the wagon with the others. I was very happy. But, my father, it was a dream, only a dream."

"Let it continue to be a dream. God grant, my daughter, that it may ever be a dream."

"Father, no girl comes to my home, I have neither company nor society. I love you very, *very* much. I do not wish to annoy you, but it would be such a joy to me, and I would not love



you any less, could I just for once go to Big Bone Springs with a party such as this party of the dream seemed to be. May I not, my father?"

"Daughter," replied Warwick, "put aside these frivolities. They are temptations that the devil sends. No credit are they to the young persons of whom you speak, and who will yet sup of sorrow. Such company would disgrace the daughter of your father. 'Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.' These young people sin in God's sight. They do unrighteous things, of which you have no knowledge, and which, while I live, shall never be a part of your life. Worldly music, frolicking, dancing, are an abomination to the Lord. Never, never, I say, shall the daughter of Warwick take part in such unholy acts. Child of mine, you, who enjoy the manifold blessings God has showered on your path, and yet openly crave for unhallowed joys, know that your father would rather see you in your shroud than the member of such a party. The devil, I say, tempts the unwary. Turn your thoughts to holy things; sing the 373rd hymn; pray to God for strength, my child. Listen to the words of the sacred text:

‘It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting.’ ”

The girl kneeled, and buried her face in her hands. The man turned to his Bible. Just then a sheet of lightning flashed across the cloud that had loomed out from the southwest, and was immediately followed by a shock of thunder that shook the house and made the knob tremble. The unexpected interruption seemed to remind Warwick of a neglected duty. He rose, strapped a pair of rawhide leggings about his ankles, slipped a small Bible and hymn-book into a pair of saddle-bags, and started for the door.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE YELLOW FLOOD.

EVENING had not fallen, yet the room had suddenly become darkened by a leaden gloom-shade, such as in this section of our land falls occasionally on the hills and valleys when, of a sultry afternoon, the upstarting clouds close in from the southwest and lose themselves among the knobs, cliffs and gorges.

With legs encased in yellow leggings, and slouch hat drawn firmly over his forehead, Warwick was ready to take his departure. In one hand he held a short cowhide riding whip, in the other the well-worn saddle-bags. His daughter had begun a final plea when a crash of thunder, like a material object, seemed to strike against the house and then thumped and bounded and rolled away in the distance, as if gigantic balls were bouncing from knob to knob. The girl drew back, and her face grew white. Warwick seemed not to notice

her fright, nor to hear the thunder crash. With a rough kindness he stroked her hair as she stood, pleading, between the door and himself.

"Tut, tut, child," he said, "many is the time your father has gone forth into storms harder than this one. What harm can a drop of water do me?"

"But, father, wait until the storm is over."

Warwick shook his head. "You do not know what is best, child."

At that moment a vivid sheet of lightning streamed into the window, lighting up her face.

"I am so afraid! Do not leave me now."

"And has it come to this?" the father replied. "Have my teachings left you, my daughter, altogether without faith? Do you, for whom the heart of your father has ever gone in supplication to the great God above—do you, who should know right from wrong, if ever child knew it, not comprehend that if the good Lord has elected that man shall die of lightning stroke, no human hand, no mortal power, can avert the end?"

"But the flood, the water is coming down in sheets, the creek is overflowing; you will drown, my father."

"If a man is born to be drowned," said Warwick, "he will never die in any other way. If a man is not destined to be drowned, he cannot drown. Child, you do wrong when you question God's power to direct these things. You are impious when you attempt to persuade your father to shirk his duty. Did I not announce that evening services would begin this day at early candle-light? Never yet did Preacher Warwick fail to keep his word to the Lord. It is written, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'"

The girl threw her arms about the form of her father, her head hardly reaching to his shoulder.

"Do not leave me alone in this storm, please do not. Others will not go to church to-night."

"Daughter, God sent this storm for some beneficent purpose, and the same God bade me announce services this evening. You say that others will not go to church to-night. Then so be it. Alone in the holy sanctuary, I shall pray for timid sinners who shrink from a touch of water. Go I must, if for no other reason than to plead for you in God's holy house—for you,

who see not the devil's allurements, who doubt the power of God to direct men's footsteps according to the foreordained plan. Daughter, kneel, and beseech the great God of Hosts to give you the strength to trust in His all-wise power and in His love for man, a sinner. God knows best why, in His loving mercy, He directed me, His servant, to announce services this evening. God knows, too, why this storm of lightning-stroke and flood was sent. God only knows why these things are, but if they *are*, they are for the best, and that alone concerns me, His trusting servant. That which was ordained in the beginning must be."

Carrying his saddle-bags, Warwick passed out of the door into the storm, which now seemed to have centred itself about the very knob upon which his house stood. The girl sank upon her knees beside a chair, burying her face in her hands, while the wind and rain, mixed with hail, broke forth with increasing fury. Amid the interlocked gleam of lightning-strokes fast following each other, and the thunder crashes, that were as a medley of blows and snaps and long-drawn-out rolls, the man on the horse passed

cautiously down the hill, toward the bank-full creek at its base.

Slowly, step by step, the horse picked his way along the rocky path, which was now threaded with yellow rills, down to the creek-road, into which the path merged, and passed under the angry torrent, which now filled its channel and crept over the banks. Without hesitation the well-trained beast stepped into the water, slowly advancing, step by step, over the uneven, flat stone bottom, until the feet of the rider were covered by the flood. Suddenly Warwick drew the reins, turned his face up the stream, placed his hand behind his ear and listened, as if to catch a sound that the storm and rushing water rendered indistinct.

After listening for a moment he backed his horse out of the flood, and, turning up the stream, he forced his way along the bank, peering closely and anxiously at the seething torrent. At a spot where the water eddied in a deep pool, he saw a man clinging to the top of a snagged tree's trunk, which, with roots caught in the earth, swerved back and forth as the circling water swept its free end from side to side. The unfor-

tunate struggler possessed strength enough, it was evident, to cling for a time only, with just voice enough to cry out weakly. The chances were that he would not be heard, or even if he were that no one could do more than wait on the bank, and watch the rushing waters loosen the clasp of the weakened arms and close over the body.

The struggling beast on which Warwick rode floundered along the muddy bank, among the tall horse weeds, alders and iron weeds that, just outside the fence, almost shut from sight the creek it bordered. In some places there was hardly space enough for a cow-path between fence and flood, but Warwick urged his way through and over all obstructions until he reached a spot on a line with the stranger.

Only a few feet separated the two, but the short distance seemed impassable.

"Hold fast! pray to the Lord for strength," cried Warwick, striking his horse a sharp cut with his whip.

Through the beating storm the words were heard by the struggler; the horse and rider disappeared in the underbrush, through which crept



the cow-path up the creek. When Warwick was a short distance above the tree trunk to which the man was clinging, he turned his horse's head toward the flood, and with another cut of the whip forced him into the waters.

Then followed a wonderful display of horsemanship, human courage, and animal faith in man, to which, however, the Kentucky knobs and wilds alone were witness. Breasting the flood, head upstream and body submerged, the horse was swept, like a fragment of drift, down the rapids and into the eddy, where clung the drowning man. Warwick seemed to be fully as helpless as, and in even greater danger than, the man he aimed to help. But as the horse neared the spot where swayed the sunken log, Warwick stretched out his right arm and, clutching the man in peril, drew him with a firm grasp to his side. Just as the ford was reached the feet of the horse struck the stones; then, leaping from his place in the saddle, with the exhausted man clasped in his right arm, and leading his horse, Warwick beat his way out of the creek, and climbed the rocky road that led to his home on the knob.

The door was opened, and Warwick, carrying

his burden, entered the room from which he had so recently departed. Placing the limp figure on a chair, he turned to his daughter, and, with a strange indifference to the well-being of either the stranger or himself, he began:

“Daughter, man’s sins are many, but the Lord is merciful to those who are destined for salvation. Pray that God may have willed that you are to be forgiven for the error of heart that led you this day both to listen to Satan and try to thwart the plans of the Almighty. Kneel and pray, and then rise up firm in strength and faithful in purpose, ready henceforth to do the will of the Lord. Daughter, could your father have listened to your appeal, the voice of the man in distress would have been unheard. Manifold are thy ways, O Lord, and past understanding. That which is to be must come to pass. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

## CHAPTER III.

### THE STRANGER.

THERE came an interruption from without, a youth entered the room, hesitating a moment in the darkness; but Warwick's eyes were now accustomed to the gloom. "And so at last you have come to the house, Joshua; why did you stay so long in the tobacco patch?"

"The storm beat me back; I waited a bit for it to break."

"Is the blood of Warwick running out? A girl trying to induce her father to disobey the Lord for fear of a drop of rain, a boy afraid to wet his face in a summer shower?" He paused, and, pointing to the man on the chair: "Son, take this wanderer to your room, give him a welcome such as is due to one in distress—one who has been guided to our home by the hand of the

Lord. But stop—" The minister stepped to the cupboard, and, taking a flask from a chest of bottles, poured the liquor into the goblet and held it to the lips of the stranger, who endeavored vainly to swallow the potion. With a show of impatience, Warwick filled the goblet and drained it to the last drop, suggesting next that it might be well to heat some water and make the stranger a weak whiskey punch or an eggnog. Then he went again into the storm, which now had decreased in intensity, and turned his horse down the path toward the torrent, which, high above the bank, raged through the gorge. Beyond this ford other angry torrents were to be crossed before he could reach the little church on the island, where he had announced services that night at early candle-light. That he succeeded in his object and returned in safety was seen the next morning, when he sat, as usual, at the head of his table and asked a blessing that contained no allusion to his own trials or privations.

Four persons were present—the stranger, Warwick, his son and his daughter. For a time it seemed as though the meal might be finished in silence. The girl was timid, the boy churlish,

Warwick absorbed in thought, and the stranger reserved, although twice he had attempted to introduce the subject of his rescue. The first time he met with a reply indicating that there could be no risk to one who had faith in the Lord; the second time he was informed, in words that could not be misconstrued, that whatever credit was due should be given to God.

"We are all tools in a mighty scheme, in which man is helpless and powerless. You could not avoid the undermined bank that slipped and cast you into the stream. I could not help but go out into the storm, to be guided to your rescue."

"But surely you need not have risked your life for me."

"I could have done nothing but what I did. I could not have moved a hand but as the Lord decreed in the beginning it should move. I could not have crossed that stream had I attempted to do so, nor could I on the bank have watched your weakened hands unclasp had I been ever so afraid of self-injury. The act of yesterday was mapped out in the book of our lives. It was predestined that you should cling to that very log, and that I should save you from the flood."

The stranger seemed inclined to ask another question or to argue the point, but before he could speak Warwick added:

"That which is, is; that which is not, is not; that which is to come to pass, is sure to be. Does not the Word state that we are 'predestined according to the purpose of Him who maketh all things after the counsel of His own will?' "

"But—" began the guest. Warwick knew too well from experience with others what the man proposed to argue, and he interrupted impatiently.

"My friend, did you ever know a thing that had happened not to have been?"

"No. But—"

"Did you ever know a thing that did not happen to have been?"

"No—"

"Do you know of anything that God has planned in His infinite wisdom that will not come to pass?"

"No. But surely if you *would* not have ridden into that flood, you *could* have kept out of it."

"No mortal power, no will of man, could have prevented it. My friend, you ask if I could not have done differently if I had willed it. I answer,

No. Had I been ever so ready to disobey the Lord's command, I couldn't if I would."

The earnestness and aggressiveness exhibited by Warwick in this discussion abashed the stranger.

"I am fully recovered, thanks to your kindness, and will resume my journey, first, however, asking you to tell me where the man I am seeking lives."

"What is his name? I know every man in these knobs."

"His name is Warwick."

"Preacher Warwick?"

"Yes."

"God has guided your footsteps to my door. What would you have of me?"

"Are you Preacher Warwick?"

"Yes."

"I was sent here to study the geological formation of this part of Kentucky, the glacier prints on the Middle-creek, Gunpowder and other cliffs, the fossil shells of the hill formations and the big bones of 'Big Bone Lick.' I was directed to you as one who lived in this interesting section of our land, and who might give me temporary lodging and board."

"We live on coarse food; we have no luxuries, nor do we expect them. Can you put up with such fare as we offer?"

"This is good enough for any one," said the stranger lightly.

"Have you—" Warwick stopped, and looked at the visitor narrowly and suspiciously.

"Stranger, these are troublous times. There must be another question. Are you from the North or the South?"

"From the North."

"And have you no other object than to study stones and bones, and hills and hollows?"

"None."

Warwick mused a moment.

"And have you no letters?"

"No. I came by rail to Cincinnati, thence by stage to Stringtown, thence by a lift from one of your friends to a point near where you found me. There I left him, for his way led on to a branching road, but he said that Preacher Warwick lived in the very centre of the spot I wished to study. He told me, furthermore, that you would likely give me board during the time I wished to stay."



"You seem young for this kind of work—studying fossil stones and fossil bones."

"I am older than I look. Still, I am only a student in the university. I came to spend my vacation in this work."

"And you have nothing to do with the war?"

"No."

"The North has—" once more Warwick hesitated. "If you live with Warwick and have told the truth, you have nothing to fear from the people hereabout, be they for the North or for the South. But if you come here as a spy, there is danger—danger for you and for others. If you seek to live here as a rock-hunter only, well and good; but if this is not your work, be careful, for so sure as the sun shines on this knob there is danger ahead."

"I have told you the truth, Mr. Warwick."

"The whole truth?"

"Yes."

"Then you may stay," said Warwick, changing his tone. "I take some interest myself in these curious stones, which seem once to have been shells, and in these great bones, which dwarf our largest beast of to-day. You may stay for a

time, and yet, if your tongue has been led astray, so sure as the shadows lie all day long on Gunpowder's Valley, so sure will you pay for the crooked speech. This seems harsh, my young friend, but these times demand plain words."

They left the table, and Joshua went out to the tobacco field, the daughter turned her attention to the household duties, Warwick and his guest returning to the sitting-room.

"Another word," said Warwick when the others were out of hearing, "now that we are alone. You are from the North. You need not have said it. I knew it from the way you speak. I knew it last night. But that is not what I have to say now. You are here to hunt shells in the hills, and bones in the Lick Valley. Be sure you do this, and that you close your ear and your eye to things outside. To everything else let your eye be as blind as are the stone shells of our bluffs, and your ear as dead as are the mammoths whose teeth lie in the Big Bone quagmire."

The youth flushed. He was not accustomed to such plain talk. He turned away, but Warwick laid his great hand upon his shoulder.

"Troops of men in blue will pass you in the daytime, for the provo'-marshal scours both hill and valley; keep your eyes on the stones when these hoofs beat the road."

The young man shrugged his shoulders, and tried to twist from the grasp of the heavy hand.

"You may be caught from home by night, and then may meet a squad of horsemen who wear no blue clothes," said Warwick, lowering his voice. "Should any one question you, tell the truth; say you are a student of stones, and tell them that you stop with Warwick of the Knobs; and if they doubt that, bring them to me."

"But why should they interfere with me?"

"Do as I say. It is not interference for the Home Guards to inquire into the business of a stranger, nor can men, bound to the Confederacy, run the risk of betrayal by a spy with a stone hammer in his hand as a blind. Do as I say. And now, another word. The room in which you will sleep is that of my two oldest boys. They are not here now; you may never meet them; but in case they come it will be in the night. Ask no questions, keep your eyes closed; and if some man shares the room with

you and rises before daybreak, forget the incident."

Warwick's voice and his intense earnestness brought a shadow to the face of the young man.

## CHAPTER IV.

WARWICK'S OATH. "I SWEAR IT, JOHN."

As Warwick looked down the hill toward the creek road at its base, a horseman came from the direction of Stringtown, and turned toward the house on the knob. The preacher went out hastily, and stood by the front door until the new arrival drew rein.

"Come in, Dr. John, and rest," said Warwick. "What brings you here so early? No sickness in the neighborhood, I reckon?"

"No," replied the doctor, dismounting and hitching his horse to the rack. "I came to see you, Warwick, and I cannot stay, although, so far as others know, I am here on professional business. Are we alone?"

"Yes."

"You have a son with Morgan."

"And you have a brother," replied Warwick. "Need we be alone to speak of what is known to all Stringtown County?"

"Our cause is a common one, Warwick, and you know I am not one to disturb you unnecessarily."

"It takes much to disturb a man in such times as these," said Warwick.

"Then let us speak as man to man. Warwick, you know every nook and corner, every crevice of the knobs; you are familiar with every path and creek-bed."

"True. My father's father helped drive the Indians from this section; here my father was born; here I first saw the light, and here my children were born. Why should I not know the land? It would be strange if I did not."

"Enough, Warwick; let's come to the point. Your help is needed. Two weeks from Monday night I shall come again, but it must be late in the night, and I shall not be alone. I will tap twice on the front door and then once. Be ready to receive the man who rides with me. Hide him in the knobs, hide him where neither Home

Guard nor provo'-marshal can find him. See that he has food, Warwick; and, if necessary, fight before harm come to him. This is the errand that brings me here to-day."

"Two weeks from Monday night," mused Warwick. "The first Monday after the first Sunday."

"And then?" he asked.

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"You will be informed. The man for whom you are to care will be in your charge until he is sought by others, who stand ready to take him along his journey."

"Toward the south?"

"Yes."

"Dr. John, it is not for me to question one known to be as true as you to the Southern cause; but I must ask, is there great danger connected with this visit?"

"Yes."

"From the Home Guards?"

"Yes."

"Again. Is the man who comes in secret to seek my home worth a life?"

"Yes."

"Warwick's?"

"Yes."

"You may bring him. I promise that the Monday night following the first Sunday that follows the first Saturday of next month Warwick will be in this room, listening for the tap on the door. I swear it, John."

Just then a noise in the adjoining room caused the quick-eared doctor to turn his face in that direction.

"Tut, tut, John," said Warwick, "the door is puncheon. No one can hear."

Mounting his horse, the physician rode down the hill, repeating as he departed, "Be ready, Warwick. The Confederate cause risks much on you that Monday night."

But it was evident that Warwick was less sure of the door than seemed to be the case when he spoke to the doctor. For a long time he sat in reverie, gazing at its oak surface. "What is to be, will be," he finally said. "I must not question the Lord, who led the guest to my door."

The next morning Joshua, his son, started for Stringtown to get the trunk and baggage of the guest, who handed the youth a letter as he left



the house. It had been hastily written, and was as follows:

"DEAR CHARLEY: Here I am in Stringtown County, Kentucky, but I half wish myself elsewhere. I came near drowning the night of my arrival; might have drowned but for a strange make-up of a man, a giant preacher, who rode his horse into as vicious a flood as I ever saw, and risked his life to pick me off a snag. Talk about your surf and undertows, you haven't a wave on the coast that approaches this devilish yellow creek, that runs like a race-horse and sucks and surges and roars its way through hills high enough to scrape the horns off the moon. But here I am, ready to study fossils and bones and—oh, well, anything that comes my way. A devilish curious old man, this man Warwick, the first predestinarian I ever met; lucky it is for me, too, that he is one, for none but a religious fanatic would have risked his life as he did for me. But his gawky son Joshua is waiting for this letter, and I must close.

"LIONEL.

"P. S. Forgot to say that Mr. Warwick has a slip of a daughter about sixteen years of age, as timid as a rabbit and as pretty as a dove. Send me the papers regularly. Only the *Signs of the Times* comes to this place."

## CHAPTER V.

### MARY AND LIONEL.

THUS began the Kentucky life of the young student from the North. Each morning the family breakfasted before the rise of the sun; and, when the meal was finished, Joshua and his father turned toward the tobacco patch, where both worked diligently until noon. Again after dinner they returned to the field. Lionel lingered in the house until the dew disappeared, classifying his fossil collection of the previous day, or reading the papers that soon began coming to him at irregular intervals. The girl busied herself about the housework. There were two servants, one an old negro woman, the other a negro man not less aged; but they gave no attention to the house, their duties being to attend to the cooking and the kitchen and dining-room work.

So whenever Lionel was in the house the daughter was usually near; and, naturally, it was

not long before she began to exhibit some curiosity concerning the work of the young man. She discovered that the visitor was a student in one of the celebrated universities of New England, and had been advised by the professor of geology to spend his vacation near Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, where, as he had informed her father, not only were to be found rich fields of fossil, shellfish and trilobites, but mammoth and mastodon bones, buffalo roads, Indian trails and other subjects of great interest to naturalists.

On reaching Stringtown, as already related, he left his baggage, and in a farmer's spring wagon started for the home of Preacher Warwick, who had been recommended to him by the landlord of the "Williams House" in Stringtown as one who lived in the very heart of the region he sought, and who had room in his home for a boarder, providing he would agree to take one.

"But," said Mr. Williams, "Warwick has two sons in the rebel army, and because you are from the North he may decline to give you lodging." After leaving the wagon of the farmer, about a mile from Warwick's house, the storm came suddenly; and next, as he stood on an undercut

sod, came the accident that threw him into the torrent.

"Your father is a very stern man, Miss Warwick. He seems never to smile," concluded Lionel.

"Father seems harsh," she answered, "but he is very kind. He speaks sternly, but he means no harm. He loves his church above all things, and is devoted to his religion."

She hesitated and then added, "Do not cross him in his views concerning baptism or in his religious belief about the infallible decrees of God, for he will not take it kindly. I know how honest are his motives, and I know, too, his kindly disposition."

"But to you, Miss Warwick, he speaks very harshly."

"You do not know him."

"He is very religious, but yet he believes that his daughter—" Lionel paused.

"You wish to say that he believes I am not elected to salvation?" said the girl.

"That is it. *You* do not believe it, do you? You do not believe that such as you will be damned and such as your father saved?"

"I do, yes, I do," said the girl earnestly, "for I cannot make a public confession. It is terrible, this thing of passing helplessly to eternal punishment. Oh, it is terrible to think of!"

"What wrong have you done?"

"I was born a sinner, and have not seen God's grace. Oh, it is awful to be damned eternally! But I do not wish to speak of these things, this is not what I wish to say to you. Be careful to avoid the subject of religion; let father have his word, but make no reply while you stay with us. And—" she stopped.

"And what?"

"Go regularly to church. To-morrow is meeting-day, the first Sabbath that follows the first Saturday. Go to church with us. And, above all, do not study on the Sabbath; do not break stones, do not pick up fossils, do not read the newspapers."

"What am I to do?"

"After attending morning services and riding horseback five miles to and from church, you will have little time left. Pass it in God's service."

"And this has been your life?"

"From childhood," she answered. "Never has

the first Sabbath following the first Saturday found me absent from church. Winter, summer, rain, snow or flood are to me one and the same that day."

"I call this a devilish—" began the young man; but then he stopped and added with a smile, "Be it as you say, Miss Warwick. I am a guest, and shall abide by the custom of the family."

"To-morrow, then, you will go to church and will not offend father by studying or reading?"

"I shall do as you wish."

"Last Sabbath you collected fossils, but, fortunately, father was away all day, and was not aware of it. He preached in the old church up the Stringtown pike, and it took him from daylight until dark to go and return. However, he will be home to-morrow, and that is why I speak so to you to-day."

That night the guest wrote to his friend:

"DEAR CHARLEY: I'm in it for sure. To-morrow I've got to go to church and be good, after the style of a hard-shell Baptist, and be good, too, while I am out of church. Only think, I cannot pick up a fossil, or study my Dana, or break a stone. I must sit and think of, the old

scratch knows what, read the Bible and psalm-book, and mope the day away. Charley, this country is a geological mine. These hills and cliffs are made up of strata of fossil, blue limestone, over which once beat the ancient ocean. The tops of the highest knobs and the floor of the creeks and all between are a mass of stone shells. Here the famed Cincinnati Formation is to be seen at its best.

“Charley, this old man Warwick is a case. He takes his dram as regularly as dram-time comes, and says his prayers as sure as the sun rises or the dinner-table is set. He sings a psalm, too, now and then, and yet, amid all his religious fervency and his faith in a beneficent God, this daughter of his is afraid to smile in his presence. I don’t know just how the old man would take it, but *she* ought to see the world, and I’d like to—

“Oh, well, to-morrow we all go to ‘meeting’ on horseback, ride five miles, rain or shine, and back again. The first Sunday that follows the first Saturday is ‘meeting’ day.

“LIONEL.

“Ha! ha! the first Sunday that follows the first Saturday.”



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHURCH ON THE ISLAND.—WARWICK'S TRIALS BEGIN.

SUNDAY morning Warwick, his family and Lionel started to church on horseback. As they neared the ford of the creek at the base of the hill Lionel noticed on the opposite summit, where the road crossed its crest, two men on horseback, watching the party in the valley. But Warwick apparently did not see them, for he turned down the branch, his companions following in single file. Lionel was the last in the line; and as they turned away he chanced again to look toward the men on the hill, and saw that they were moving slowly down the road. Then his eyes caught the glitter of brass in the sunlight. A moment later he lost sight of them.

Any one familiar with this part of Stringtown County need not be informed that the view is exceptionally picturesque. The hills rise, each

seeming to strive to get above the one behind. The road branches and divides, as does the creek, for along each branch of the creek a horse-path turns toward the homes that rest along the hill-sides and near their summits. The fossil stones lie flat in the creek-beds, layer above layer they shelve out of the yellow clay in broken edges.

The forests along the creek have never been touched by the axe, excepting where a tree has been felled to make way for the narrow roadway; the hillsides are occasionally cleared to give space for a tobacco patch or a touch of corn; but, as a rule, Nature holds her own in the knobs and valleys of Stringtown County. At the first opportunity, where the road widened, Lionel drew his horse alongside that of Joshua.

"Did you see the horsemen on the hill?"

"D' you think I'm blind?"

"Were they not cavalrymen?"

Joshua looked sharply at the questioner. "Is thet yer consarn?"

"No. I only asked out of curiosity."

"I hain't got no curiosity, and I reckon et'll be better fer you not ter hev any. Ef a feller is goin' ter meetin' in Stringtown County, he hes

'nough ter do ef he keeps his eyes on his horse's ears and his ears on the clink of the horse's feet. Thet's his bus'ness.'

Lionel, stung by the rebuke, drew his horse back, and in single file the troop passed on to worship. Warwick rode ahead, silent, stern, gloomy, thinking of his God and his duty. Behind him, one after the other, came Mary, Joshua and the guest. No one spoke, and probably none of the Kentuckians gave a thought to the scenery; but every turn of the road brought to Lionel views that enraptured him, so different were they from those of the land he had previously known.

Whether the forests hemmed them in, whether the hillsides were uplifted to view, whether the party was fording the creek or crossing a bottom where the horse road cut a point of soil washed down from the heights above, was one and the same, a picture. Soon they passed a spot where a side road branched from the path, and there Lionel saw, not fifty feet away, a solitary cavalryman in blue, gazing at the church-going squad. But there was no sign of recognition, and they passed on. The path led deeper into the primeval forests; the shadows were thicker, the moist air

grew sappier, even though the day was lengthening. Lionel again drew his horse close to that of Joshua.

"Another cavalryman was stationed to the right of our path."

Joshua glanced at the speaker inquisitively.

"'Pears ter me you air consarned. I hain't no reason ter suspect you, but I hain't took no stock in thet rock story. Grown men trampin' the hills, pickin' up stone shells, hev monstrous little ter do, ef thet's their only bus'ness."

With this he forged ahead, while Lionel, with the second rebuke and its implied suspicion to redden his ears and flush his cheeks, followed in the rear.

It was now near ten o'clock, and yet each leaf and branch was dew-laden. The sun had been up five hours and more, and yet there was no ray in the deepening gulches through which they passed. The underbrush seemed even thicker, the fog hung like a wet blanket about them. Suddenly Joshua drew his horse to one side out of the path, and seized the bridle of Lionel. Pointing to the bank of bushes, he said:

"Ef you are the one the bluecoats are watchin'

—and you seem ter show et—this is yer last chance. Slip off yer horse, push through thet bunch of leaves, and you'll find a path. Foller et ter the end; et'll lead you ter a cave under a rock; stay thar till yer called fer. I'll pass the word 'round, and you'll be fed and keered fer till a chance comes ter help you out."

Lionel was astonished, and saw at once that Joshua considered him the suspected person.

"I have not deceived you," he said. "I am just what I claimed to be, and I have no other business than rock-hunting. The soldiers do not concern me. I am simply curious. Things here are so strange to me."

The young Kentuckian looked at him intently, still holding the bridle reins.

"Ef thet's so, yer a double fool. First, fer hevin' sech a bus'ness, and, second, fer not tendin' ter et and lettin' outsiders alone. I tell you ag'in thet et ain't safe in Stringtown County, Kantuck, ter wedge inter other people's affairs. Them sogers air not out fer fun, but their bis'ness ain't my consarn so fer es I knows of now. I jest goes on ter meetin', and waits fer them ter show who they're after. Thet's what you'd better do,

too. Keep yer eyes on yer horse's ears and yer ears on the sound of yer horse's feet, I says." He loosened his hold on the lines and rode on.

Gloomier than ever were the thickening forests on either side; the path ahead passed into a mass of shadows. The thickets to the right and the left wedged themselves together over the path, the creek seemed to move silently, as if to ripple were a sin; the sky was shut from sight by the interlaced foliage. Occasionally a gray squirrel on the trunk of a tree barked, frisked his tail and disappeared; now and then a striped ground squirrel squealed and then popped beneath a log; occasionally a turtle dropped with a splash into the still waters of the ever-present creek. Such were the sounds and such the scenes—such only, if we except the snake, which seemed to slip from off every stone and glide across the breast of the creek, or slide into the weeds that banked the thicket-bound path which, creeping beneath the trees, led toward the house of God.

At last abruptly they emerged from the forest, and came upon a little church built of stone. It stood on a point of land close to the creek, where the stream divided, to close in again behind the

church. On either side ran the water, producing on the left branch a great natural pool. The forest closed down to the east and the west, the north and the south; the ever-present hills towered higher and higher, the fastnesses of the knobs and valleys seemed here to dominate as they did nowhere else, and to shut mankind from all that might lie outside.

Notwithstanding the natural lightheartedness of Lionel, a strange sensation came over him as this scene burst to view from out the forest depths, a sensation such as comes to men reared amid the display of fashionable religions, when abruptly confronted by such an offering to God. Primitive Christianity like this was to Lionel unknown. Having hitched their horses at a rack, where many others were standing, the party entered the front door of the stone structure, and there met a transverse partition that shut out the room beyond. Mary now turned to the left, and passed through a door in the partition. Warwick, followed by his son and Lionel, turned to the right and passed through a similar door into the same room.

In the rear, facing them, stood the pulpit, to

which Warwick advanced with slow and measured tread, seating himself in a chair behind it.\* Joshua sank into the aisle end of a seat about half-way down the room, and as he made no movement to give Lionel a place beside him, the latter took the aisle end of the pew in front. No sound broke the stillness of the room, and Lionel could not curb his own curiosity, as did the members of this congregation, to whom a stranger was an innovation; yet they gave him no glance. He noticed that a rail over the central pews ran lengthwise, dividing the men from the women. Curiosity prompted him to turn his head, but he caught no glance toward himself. Men and women alike seemed indifferent to his presence.

Austere and stern, Warwick sat behind the simple white pulpit. First, he took the Bible from its place before him, turned its pages gently, tenderly, and placed a ribbon-mark between the leaves that bore the text; then he returned the book to its place. Then he opened his hymn-book and laid it upon the Bible. After

\*As a statement of fact, this pulpit should have been between the front doors, and the congregation should have faced the incomers. Nor was there a vestibule in any of these old churches.—J. U. L.



this he sat again in silence, seemingly oblivious to all things—even to himself.

If this place of worship was touchingly simple, as contrasted with others Lionel had seen, not less touchingly earnest were the worshippers. To the left of the rail were many women and girls, in whom a stranger like himself must excite great curiosity, but not an eye was turned in his direction. To the right, men and boys were scattered, white-haired men and young boys; but they, too, sat as still as did the women.

The oppressive silence was broken only by the occasional tramp of the feet of the horses that bore newcomers, and the subsequent entrance of the riders, who, as had the others, quietly seated themselves. Ill at ease, painfully disconcerted, Lionel again turned his head; behind him were now scattered many forms similar to those in front, excepting that at the very back of the church were to be seen a few black faces, the rear benches being, as he now discovered, reserved for negroes. But those of the congregation who sat behind were as indifferent to all others as were those in front.

Finally Warwick arose and said, "Let us all

kneel in humble prayer to Almighty God." Immediately every knee was bent on the bare floor. Warwick lifted his hands, and every head in the audience bowed. An invocation to the Creator that was typical of simplicity, of faith, of reverence, and next, as the word "Amen" was spoken, each head was raised and the members of the congregation resumed their seats.

Warwick slowly read the opening hymn, and then for the first time it occurred to Lionel that this was the only hymn-book in the room. No other was to be seen, and the young man wondered how the congregation expected to carry the lines. But he was not left in suspense long, for after reading the verses Warwick said:

"Let us unite in singing this, the second hymn in the supplement of the hymn-book, omitting the seventh and ninth stanzas." He read therefrom again the first two lines, raised his voice to lead the singing, and was joined by the entire congregation. In this manner all the verses were completed. Then came a long prayer, a more earnest prayer, and next another song and then the sermon, which was a direct predestinarian argument, its object being to show that

only one road led to salvation, and that the sinner must be elected by the One on high, baptized bodily beneath the water, or be forever damned.

The text was taken from Acts xiii. 48, last clause, and step by step the minister led his congregation through his well-mapped line of argument, basing each point on the Scriptures; step by step, through "firstly," through "secondly," and then to "thirdly." He began in a very low tone, his voice growing more earnest, more loud and more severe as he toiled on and up toward the end of this, the most remarkable sermon Lionel had ever heard. But as he commenced "and thirdly," there came a sound from outside, the clatter of horses' feet, that, beating the stones in the distance, grew louder and louder until they crushed the fossil creek-bed close about the church.

There was no change in the voice of the preacher, not a head of the congregation turned; the worshippers sat seemingly oblivious to what was happening outside. Warwick must have seen the form of a man rise before the window to his right. Lionel saw it, a man on horseback with a gun in his hand, gazing into the room.

He must have seen, one by one, the blue-coated cavalrymen take their positions before the windows. The men must also have been observed by the members of the congregation, who, however, sat as oblivious to their presence as was their pastor.

Then came the sound of men dismounting, the tramp of leather boots, and the clanging of many sabres, which sounded ominously from without as their tips struck the stones. The sentries remained before the windows, while tramp, tramp, tramp came heavy footsteps into the front door, across the vestibule, and then into each side of the house of God. Down each aisle passed a line of soldiers until the leaders faced the pulpit where Warwick was calmly preaching the word of God to those who sat before him, and who seemed engrossed only in that word.

As the leader stopped in front of the altar the minister turned upon them a look stern and determined. Pointing to the vacant bench, he said, "Be seated; you are welcome."

Hesitating, as if undecided, the man seemed inclined at first to protest against the word of command; but then, as if unable to withstand the

combined order and invitation, sank with a clank into the vacant place; then each armed man in both aisles seated himself in the nearest pew. When the confusion and noise subsided, soldiers and civilians together listened to the austere minister, who continued his sermon as if no unusual interruption had occurred, listened until the word amen was reached, the final prayer, the ending song. Then the benediction was pronounced; and while yet the mixed audience stood with uncovered heads, Warwick, in a low voice that could, however, be heard distinctly by all, spoke to the leader, who faced the speaker.

"For whom do you search?"

"For Mr. Warwick."

"There are many Warwicks in Stringtown County."

"I hold an order for the arrest of Preacher Warwick—Warwick of the Knobs."

"What is the charge?"

"Treason."

"I am the man. You need seek no farther."

Deliberately, and without showing any emotion, the parson, hat in hand, turned from the pulpit and followed the officer down the aisle.

As they passed, the awaiting soldiers fell into line and tramped their way behind them out of the church; clank, clank, sounded the sabres as their tips struck the floor and bumped the wooden pew ends; thump, thump, the heavy boots of the cavalymen beat the uncarpeted boards. Then the guardsmen at the windows disappeared, and the men and women turned toward the aisles; and in a few moments the meeting-house on the island was empty.

When Lionel reached the open air the cavalrymen, in single file, were preparing to ride away, Warwick near the centre of the line. He did not speak, nor did any one attempt to converse with him. Soon the troop passed from sight, the sound of the horses' feet died away, and group by group the members of the broken congregation mounted their horses and hurried each to his home amid the hills or in the valley, leaving the old stone church alone by the side of the baptismal pool in Gunpowder Creek. Among them were Lionel and the two children of Warwick, who departed for their home on the knob as silently as had the others. Twice Lionel attempted to talk with his companions during the journey, for,

strange as it may seem, neither exhibited any outward signs of emotion. Once, when the path widened, he rode to the girl's side.

"This is a strange thing," he said.

"We of Stringtown County are used to such surprises. These are terrible times for us," was all she said.

A little while later he ventured to speak to Joshua to the same effect.

"Ef et takes a hunderd bluecoats ter took up a man with a Bible, how many would et take ter took him ef he hed a gun?" said Joshua.

"What do you suppose your father has done?"

"Et don't matter what he done, er ain't done. Et all depends on what some feller says he done, and I guess they've got the feller readyter say et."

"You do not think that he will be away long? Surely your father cannot be charged with anything serious?"

"He'll not be back at all, fer he'll never took thet oath. The old church's closed fer the summer, and winter, too, p'raps. Pap's bound fer Camp Chase. Ef et war not fer leavin' sister alone I'd start fer the rebel army to-night."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHARGE AGAINST WARWICK.

WARWICK was taken to the county seat of Stringtown County and then direct to the home of the provost-marshal. No introduction was necessary, for the men had known each other from childhood. Both had been born and reared in that county, the ancestors of both had toiled to clear the land, and on that same land they had fought the Indian and the wild beast.

Having entered the room, the prisoner was invited to be seated. Only Warwick and the provost-marshal were present, for the soldiers remained outside.

"And now, James, may I know why I have been arrested?" Warwick asked coldly, his look severe.

"By order of the general."



"The charge?"

"Treason."

Instantly the mind of Warwick reverted to the guest who sat behind the door at the time of Dr. John's visit, and he decided at once that this man had been the informer. Indignation shook him, for to a Kentuckian such a breach of hospitality was despicable. But he gave no outward expression or intimation of his suspicion.

"James, you have sworn to do these things, much to your discredit, too. Would it not be better to go into the Northern army, and let strangers slip around our Stringtown County roads and arrest your old friends?"

"Be patient, Mr. Warwick," replied the marshal in a conciliatory tone; "things may not be as bad as you think. You are too old to attempt to serve the Confederacy. You are also a minister, and, being a man of peace, need not concern yourself in the troublesome affairs that now disturb the country. Be thoughtful of your own interests; leave the settlement of these temporal matters to other hands. You have been arrested by me, it is true, but because of a positive order from my superior. Is it not better for you that I,

an old friend, hold this position than if an outsider were provost-marshal of Stringtown County?"

"What is the full charge against me?" asked Warwick, ignoring the argument.

"The charge, Mr. Warwick, is that you sympathized with the South; that you have openly prayed for the rebel cause, and have sung rebel songs before the people."

"The man who says that I sympathize with the South tells the truth. I have two sons in the Confederate army, and my hope is that their cause may succeed. I believe it just and right. But the man who says that in public I sang rebel songs lies, for in public and private I sing only the sacred songs of God. When was it, sir, that it is charged I sang these worldly songs?"

"It is said that while preaching you openly proclaim yourself a rebel; that you pray for the rebels; and then, too, while in the pulpit, that you sang rebel songs."

"James, that is a lie. You know that in the sacred house of God I preach only the word of God. Shame, shame on you, to listen to such a charge. You know me well, and that my tongue should be torn from its roots before these

things would be done by me. Who makes the charge?"

"The charge is made by the general, who bases his order for your arrest on the sworn testimony of witnesses who stand ready to testify thereto."

"And who may these witnesses be?" asked Warwick, for it was now evident that he had wrongfully suspected his guest.

"William and his wife, black William, your former slaves."

Until this time no one would have supposed from Warwick's tone of voice or demeanor that he was at all disturbed; that even then the troop of soldiers without were awaiting their prisoner. But at the last words of the provost-marshal he lost his self-possession, and sprang from his chair.

"By the Eternal," he cried, "and has it come to this, a citizen of Stringtown County while preaching the word of God arrested like a common criminal, led from his family like a thief, paraded through this town on the Lord's Day, a sight for all beholders, on the charge of treason made by a *nigger*?"

The provost-marshal attempted to reply, but Warwick would brook no interference.

"You sent a troop of foreigners—Dutch, Irish and Northerners mixed—to do this villanous work, sir. They did not even know me—me, a Warwick, sir, born and reared in this very county. Had you asked your Stringtown County recruits to perform the deed, you would have asked in vain, sir; and *you*, James, were ashamed to lead the gang. You discredit the land of your birth; you disgrace your own people and your own kindred by such an infamous deed, done on the word of a *nigger*."

Not in the least disturbed, the marshal replied: "I did the bidding of my superiors, and it pained me deeply, I assure you, Mr. Warwick, but the order came. I could but obey."

"On the testimony of a nigger, whose parents my father bought, to save them from going further South," Warwick sneered.

"That does not concern us now. Be calm, Mr. Warwick."

"It concerns *me*, sir. The injustice and wrong makes my blood boil."

He shook his clenched hand at the marshal; and then, pointing his finger toward the north, vehemently added:

“When New York State freed her niggers she did so *gradually*, in order that time might be given their owners to remove the able-bodied slaves to the South. The parents of that ‘William’ were of a New York gang, led by a New York slave-dealer, and he begged my father to buy them both. This my father did, partly out of pity, and you know the rest. This same North that sold us all our slaves and pocketed our money now cry ‘traffic in human flesh,’ and send armed men to steal them back—*steal* them, sir; and now they teach the descendants of those same slaves to concoct villanous tales concerning their lifelong protectors and rightful owners—tales that shame the devil, sir.”

“Enough, enough, Warwick; enough of this. You may rest assured that I, your old friend, would never have ordered your arrest. I have known that you are a rebel sympathizer. Have I not left you in peace?”

“I make no denial of my love for the Southern cause.”

“I know that two of your sons are in the rebel army.”

“Yes, and Warwick is proud of it.”

"Kentucky is under martial law, and yet I did not disturb you."

"We were boys together, James, but now our paths separate. I have looked for you and your soldiers day and night. I have schooled my children to anticipate my arrest and to be prepared for my transportation to the North. Even my daughter, who shrinks from a clap of thunder, was ever ready for the Home Guards; and to-day she met, as should a Warwick, this crisis, which bids men be men, and bids children be ready for the worst. But yet, James, I did not look for arrest on a charge made by a nigger. Shame on you, James, for this!"

"Here are the orders," was the reply. "I simply carry them out. Mr. Warwick, I am directed to send you to Covington to-morrow, from whence you will be at once transferred to Camp Chase, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you take the oath."

"Burbridge's iron-clad oath?"

"Yes."

"Never, James, never. Send me to Camp Chase, Johnston's Island, anywhere; never will I take that despot's oath."

"It is but a promise to be loyal."

"It is more, James, and you know it. By that oath I promise allegiance to the *North*, not to the United States, for there are now no United States. This oath also makes me promise not to help a Southern soldier in distress by shelter, food, even a drink of water, to turn my own children from my door if they serve the South. James, you know that I believe in States' Rights; that I believe, too, that the Constitution offers no barrier against the South seceding from what is now a distasteful affiliation; that this privilege the right to property earned, and honestly earned, heired or purchased, is the cause the Confederates plead by battle."

"That is not the subject which concerns us now, Mr. Warwick. No good can come from a discussion such as this. The day of argument has passed. It is war now, and to the strongest history will give the right."

"God help our unhappy land if despotic might prevail over right," said Warwick. God help the negro when the vindictive invader tears him from his watchful owner's care and throws him helpless on the world. But yet, James, if these things

be ordained, so must they be. The Book says: 'I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.' "

Warwick strode back and forth across the room, but to this last remark the provost-marshal made no reply. Apparently he was waiting for the prisoner's anger to cool.

After a time the preacher stopped. "I am ready, sir, for Camp Chase."

"Mr. Warwick," spoke the officer in a kind tone, "is this course wise? Do you help the South, do you benefit yourself, do you serve your God, by such a rash decision?"

"To Camp Chase, I say. James, do your duty. Men there are in Camp Chase to whom the word of God may be preached. Men there are in Stringtown County to whom Warwick may well teach a lesson."

"Be it as you decide, Mr. Warwick; but yet I see no just reason why you should not take this oath and then in peace go to your home. It pains me deeply to—"

"Go on. Do not hesitate."

"To lock a man like you even for one night in the Stringtown County Jail. It pains me very deeply."



"It need not, sir. You know the Warwicks, you know their record. With gun over their shoulder and Bible under their arm they fought and prayed their way through the wilderness to the wilds of northern Kentucky. They also helped carve out the States north of the Ohio—helped to give the invaders who now oppress us their very homes. From this county of Stringtown men—Warwicks, too, James—shouldered their muskets and marched down the ridge where now runs the Stringtown Pike to defend old Fort Washington, where Cincinnati stands now. And from this same county in 1813 went men to fight with Perry in Lake Erie. And next, sir, Stringtown County men—a full company from this one county, sir; two brothers had I with them—marched to Mexico with General Scott and our own brave Butler, of Carrollton. And Stringtown County men fight now for liberty—the liberty of the South. They fight the tyrant, sir—the tyrant they helped to enthrone. Think you, sir, that I, whose forefathers and brothers did these things of old, and whose children to-day serve with John Morgan, shall shrink from sleeping in the jail of Stringtown County? Think you, James,

that I, who trust in God's justice and Heaven's vengeance, will rebel against the will of the All-wise God, who for some far-reaching purpose has decreed that these bitter things shall be my part?"

"So must it be, Mr. Warwick. I perceive that word of mine is powerless to move you. Farewell until to-morrow."

That night Warwick rested behind the bars of the little jail which faced the white-pillared courthouse in the county seat of Stringtown County. And that night, as by a flash, for the first time, came to Warwick the fact that the next day would be *the first Monday after the first Sunday that followed the first Saturday*.

Then there came to his mind the promise made to Dr. John:

*"I swear that the Monday night following the first Sunday that follows the first Saturday of next month Warwick will be in this room, listening for the tap on the door."*

A prisoner, destined for Camp Chase, with but one day between himself and the all-important night, Warwick sat alone in his cell.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, the sentry passed back and forth before the jail; and tramp, tramp,

tramp, all night, when not on his knees, Warwick moved from end to end of his cell. Sleep did not come to his eyes, for his mind was racked as it had never been before. On the one hand, was his sworn word to Dr. John; on the other, that iron-clad oath of Burbridge. The first he must not break, the second he could not take. In his anguish he prayed to his God for strength, for light, for help, but never with a thought other than that these trials were for the best, and that God would guide the movements of His servant in the future as He had in the past. And when the sentry gave place to the relief guard next morning, Warwick, in his cell, composed, confident, sternly pious, knelt in prayer, after which aloud he repeated the Scriptural text: "But if a man live many days, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many."

Instead of the prisoner's breakfast being served from the jailer's house, the provost-marshal directed that Warwick be brought to his own home; thus he ate with the marshal and his family, as under different circumstances he had often done before. No less fervent, however,

than on other occasions was the blessing that he asked. Breakfast over, the prisoner was conducted to the room where the audience had previously been held with the provost-marshal, who now opened the conversation.

"Mr. Warwick, I hope that mature reflection has shown you the folly of carrying to the extreme your decision of yesterday. A very painful duty it will be to me should you make it necessary to take you to Covington, for that must be the step toward Camp Chase. Spare me this unpleasant task, Mr. Warwick."

"James, I have pondered deeply. I have called on the Lord for light and strength. Not once did my eyes close last night in sleep. I, too, wish with all my soul to be spared that journey into Ohio as a prisoner."

"Then take the oath. Be sworn, Warwick, and depart in peace."

"James," said Warwick, ignoring the suggestion, "may I not go home on furlough, advise with my children, consult with my friends, attend to some urgent duties that needs must be done, and return to-morrow?"

The officer shook his head.

“On my word, James. The word of a Warwick was never broken. I promise to return to-morrow morning, and either take your oath or go to Camp Chase.”

“That your word is your bond I know, but I am powerless. I am ordered either to administer to you the oath of allegiance or this day deliver your person in Covington. I have no option, Mr. Warwick.”

“James, if any man had told me yesterday that this day I should have humiliated myself as now I do, I should have frowned the speaker down. But I, a Warwick, beg you to grant me a favor; just a single day at home—one night more—James, grant me one night only with my family, and then away with me to Camp Chase or Johnston’s Island. This one favor, James.”

“I cannot concede even that. But the oath will give you freedom for all time, for I know full well you will never break your word.”

Then to Warwick’s mind came again with painful foreboding the dialogue that passed between Dr. John and himself.

“Is the man who comes in secret to seek my help worth a life?”

"Yes."

"Warwick's?"

"Yes."

"You may bring him. I promise that the Monday night following the first Sunday that follows the first Saturday of next month Warwick will be in this room, listening for the tap on the door. I swear it, John." The time was now at hand; this day's night would be the promised night. This night he *must* be home. Knowing nothing of what passed through Warwick's brain, the marshal sat patiently awaiting his decision, unaware that on it depended events of importance that concerned General Burbridge more than an oath taken by a thousand such as Preacher Warwick. Had the provost-marshal of Stringtown County known who was to call that night at Warwick's home, he would not have hesitated a moment in taking the responsibility of freeing his prisoner and next in laying his plans to catch the nocturnal guest.

Warwick paced the room. He strode back and forth, back and forth, while still the provost-marshal sat patiently, hoping that the journey to Covington might be spared both Warwick and himself. At last the prisoner stopped.

"James," he said, "must I go away without bidding my family farewell and attending to some private duties? What matters it to Burbridge whether an obscure Kentucky country preacher begins imprisonment a day sooner or a day later? Give me this one day longer."

"It cannot be."

"James, God knows that I would not ask you to do a wrong; but cannot you honorably take the responsibility? Cannot you say to your superior that you knew Warwick would live up to his word and return on the morrow; and that, knowing this, you gave him one day of grace? Remember our mothers, our fathers, our school-boy days together, James."

The officer shook his head.

"James, a Warwick must not be taken to Camp Chase on the word of a nigger. You cannot be a party to such an indignity; go to Burbridge and argue this point with him. You are an attorney; be now both his officer and my attorney; draw up your deed transferring to Burbridge my home, farm, everything I own, real and personal; make me a pauper and my children beggars, but spare me this dishonor. Go personally and say all of

this Warwick offers for freedom, and return with the decision. I will be in this room with the deed. If the word yet be either Burbridge's iron-clad oath or Camp Chase, I will go with you a pauper prisoner. But if I be not here (and death only shall detain me), my all will be Burbridge's by the deed."

"It cannot be."

Then Warwick reverted to the charge.

"The charge is false. Never did I sing a rebel song; never did I preach a sermon *in* favor of the rebels; never in church did I pray aloud for the rebels. The charge is false, sir."

The marshal stepped to the door.

"Bring black William and his wife," he said to the guard in waiting.



## CHAPTER VIII.

“DISGRACE HANGS OVER THE HOUSE OF WAR-  
WICK.”

IN a few moments the door opened, and the negroes entered. That they knew the occupant of the room and in turn were known by him was evident; but while Warwick, with head aloft, gazed at them sternly, they, abashed, looked down at the floor.

“You may question William, Mr. Warwick,” said the provost-marshal.

“I shall do nothing of the kind, sir. *You* are hired to do these things.”

“William,” said the marshal, “your former master is in trouble through what you and your wife said in Covington.”

“’Deed, Ma’sse James, I doan tole nuffin’.”

“And you?” The marshal spoke to the woman.

“I doan tole nuffin’, needah.”

"How's this, William? I have been advised to arrest your former master and send him to Covington on charges made by yourself and wife. The officer who presented the order brought you with him to give the evidence."

"I done tole de truff in Cov'n'ton."

"Tell it again, William."

"I jes preached a leetle t' de cullud folks, like de ma'se taught me t' do, an' sung de ole songs. A niggah sojer tole nex' day dat I wah prayin' fo' de rebels an' singin' rebel songs, an' den de sojers come an' took me up. De cap'n axed me who done gib me de sahmon an' de song, an' I tole him Ma'se War'i'k of Stringtown County. Den a man wid gole shooldah straps took a book an' read de name ob Ma'se War'i'k as a man 'spected ob bein' a rebel."

"Was it a large leather book with a blue back?"

"It wah."

"I did not know your name had been recorded as a suspect, Mr. Warwick. That was done by no knowledge of mine. But, Mr. Warwick," and now the provost-marshal spoke very earnestly, "Every man whose name is in that book must be arrested on charge or suspicion, and must either

take the oath or go to Camp Chase. Go on, William.”

“De nex’ I knows de sojers had me ’n de ole woman safe in de lock-up. Den de nex’ mahnin’ dey took us out, an’ heah we am. I doan say nuffin’ bad ’bout good ole ma’sse, an’ I doan spoke nuffin’ but de truff.”

The frown deepened on the brow of Warwick.

“He lies, James. I never taught him a line of a rebel song; never did he hear me preach or pray a line of such things. Ask him to repeat the words.”

“Tell us what you preached and sang.”

“I’sse pow’ful pious, as yo’ boff knows, an’ when de spir’t comes obah me, I preaches an’ sings and exhoits like Ma’sse War’i’k do, fo’ I hab gone t’ meetin’ all my life, an’ de ma’sse knows et. I got pow’ful happy dat ’vival night an’ tole dem Cov’n’ton sinnahs dat de debbil ’ud git em suah lessen dey jump in de salbation wagon, jest like es Ma’sse War’i’k tole de folks down in de ole church on de creek. Den I got pow’ful skeered ’bout myself, an’ I shout out, ‘Lawd, forgib me, a rebel sinnah; Lawd, forgib *me*, a rebel sinnah,’ jest es Ma’sse War’i’k do ebery second Sunday

yeah in an' yeah out. Yo' know yo' do, ma'se," added William, appealing directly to Warwick.

"Go on, William. Tell us about the rebel song you sang," ordered the marshal.

"Sing de song, Rach; sing de song, ole woman."

Obedient, the old woman raised her voice, in which William joined; and soon Warwick, too, unable to withstand the habit of old, broke into the lines.

They sang one hymn after another, becoming emotionally enthused, with voices growing louder, and before they were through a smile was on the face of every occupant of the room, for the religious fervor of the two negroes had affected even the marshal. The following were the mischievous verses from three different hymns:

Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive.

Let a repenting *rebel* live.

Are not thy mercies large and free?

May not a sinner trust in thee?

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And are we wretches yet alive?

And do we yet *rebel*?

'Tis boundless, 'tis amazing love,

That bears us up from hell.

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Lord, we have long abused thy love;  
Too long indulged our sin.  
Our aching hearts now bleed to see  
What *rebels* we have been.

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Dear Saviour, prostrate at Thy feet  
A guilty *rebel* lies,  
And upward to Thy mercy seat  
Presumes to life his eyes.

“Enough, William,” spoke the marshal. “You may go. I perceive that the charge is true. Mr. Warwick *did* pray for the rebels and *did* sing rebel songs. I have heard them from your lips many times, Warwick.”

“Grant that this is so, I sang no worldly songs, and I prayed in public for no rebel soldier. James, gathered before me every Sabbath are to be found mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers of men in both armies; brave men these, James, and loving kinsmen. It would ill become me to pray for either North or South, but I do beseech the Lord each service, if it be His will, to have pity on our unhappy country.” Continuing, he added: “Now that you know the truth and the trivial nature of the charge, you will no longer detain me.”

He reached out his hand. "Farewell, James. Let us forget the unfortunate incident that has given such pain to both."

But the marshal only shook his head.

"The oath first, Mr. Warwick. The order to me is positive. The oath must be taken."

"You do not mean it, James?" A look of anguish deeper than before came over the preacher's face.

"I do, for I have no choice in the matter. Mr. Warwick, your name was in the book; all who are named in that book must be arrested, charge or no charge. The oath *only* can liberate these men. If they are loyal, they have no reason to object to it; if they are not loyal, their place is in Camp Chase."

"When do you start for Covington, James?"

"At four o'clock this afternoon. Three others, men you well know, are to be your companions."

"Take me back to my cell, sir."

Late that afternoon Warwick sent for the provost-marshal.

"Disgrace hangs over the house of Warwick, for I have decided to take the iron-clad oath of the despot Burbridge. Could you have given me one day longer, all the powers of the North, sir,

might have conspired in vain to raise my right hand. Neither threat nor argument could have opened my lips and led them to respond to the words you soon will speak. But, James, I must submit to the will of God; the Scriptures teach that ‘all things work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose.’ ”

That evening, just before dusk, Warwick might have been seen riding away from the jail. With bowed head and hat drawn down over his eyes, looking neither to the right nor to the left, without a word or a nod to any one, shamefaced, broken in spirit, alone, he rode toward his home on the knob.

## CHAPTER IX.

“YOUR FATHER, MARY, HAS BROUGHT SHAME TO  
THE NAME OF WARWICK.”

AFTER the arrest of Warwick in the church Lionel and the son and daughter returned home. No cavalrymen now guarded the by-roads, no armed horsemen sat on the brow of the hill that confronted the home on the knob. Squirrels there may have been on the tree trunks, but if so, they were not seen by the student from the North; the splash of the turtle that fell from off the log was unheard, the slipping water-snake unseen. The hills that towered over the valley, the cliffs and dells, forests and rock-bound creeks, had now no charm for the visitor, who brooded over the strange events the day had brought forth. And when the home was reached, and they were sitting at dinner, it became evident that grim, austere Preacher Warwick had drawn himself



closer to Lionel even than that personage had supposed. The inevitable blessing had previously been painfully conspicuous for its length as well as for its fervor, embodying as it did primitive faith and sincerity. Much would Lionel have given to have seen the dogmatic man who once had ruled that home sitting in his place at the head of the table. And with each succeeding meal the absence of that form and the loss of Warwick's voice grew not less, but greater.

The evening meal on Monday was late, for Joshua came from work unusually late. During the conversation Lionel remarked:

“Surely, Miss Warwick, your father will return soon.”

She shook her head. “No, we have been expecting his arrest, and transportation North. He is a Southern sympathizer.”

“He'll not be back at all, I tell you, interjected Joshua. “He couldn't git off without taking the oath, and I'd hate to be the man that holds his breath till he took thet oath. You'll not see pap home from Camp Chase till the war's over.”

“From Camp Chase!” exclaimed Lionel. “Do you think the charge is so serious?”

"I tell you it don't make no difference 'bout the charge; he's got two boys in the rebel army, and sech men in this county must either took thet oath or go to Camp Chase."

"Both you and your sister seem to accept the situation coolly and take his arrest very calmly."

"We promised him to do so," said the girl. "Besides, we have been trained in a bitter school of late. We are accustomed to such scenes as this. Scarcely a young man is left in our entire neighborhood. All are in the war, gone either to the Northern or Southern army. But that is not the worst," she added, "for many, many of the older men have been arrested and confined in Camp Chase. These are sorrowful times for those who live in Stringtown County, sir."

"But you do not seem deeply concerned over your father's arrest. You have not even inquired regarding his final destination."

"Thet's all you know 'bout et," said Joshua. "They yanked him before the provo'-marshal yisterday, and he told 'em he'd never took the oath. They put him in jail, and ter-night he'll be in Cov'n'ton, and the next night he'll be in Camp Chase, too."

Lionel was surprised at this information, but asked no questions concerning the method by which it had been obtained.

“Possibly he may take the oath. He can do no service to any one by refusing.”

“Ef he’d took thet iron-clad oath, he’d disgrace himself and all of us. No, sir; no Warwick ’ll ever took thet oath of Burbridge. He’ll die in his tracks—” Just then an unexpected sound broke upon their ears, that of horses’ feet, and Joshua left the sentence unfinished. Next a measured tread on the ground without, and then Warwick stepped into the house.

Joshua dropped his knife and fork, and looked up in amazement. His sister sprang from her place, and rushed to her father’s side, throwing her arms around him; but he thrust her off and turned his head away.

“My father,” said the girl, “what has happened? Oh, my father!” But Warwick, standing yet as before, made no reply. His great frame quivered, his breath came slowly, his chest heaved, the furrows in his forehead deepened.

He turned his ashen face toward the girl, and spoke slowly, each word being articulated with painful exactness.

"Your father, Mary, has brought shame to the name of Warwick."

Then he took his Bible, seated himself in his accustomed chair, and read aloud: "My soul trusteth in Thee; yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpast."

Over the face of Joshua came a look of utter bewilderment. Abruptly the stoop-shouldered boy took upon himself the part of a man; with ungainly gait he moved to where his father sat, and stood erect before him. For the first time he ventured to question an act of that man, whom God only heretofore had presumed to question.

"What do you mean, pap?"

"The name you bear has been disgraced, and by your father. Have pity on me, son."

"Did you taken the oath?"

"I did."

"Burbridge's oath?"

"Yes."

The boy made no reply. He turned toward Lionel, but Lionel had slipped from the room. Then, as if bewildered, he too turned to the door, leaving the broken-spirited man in his grief

with his Bible before him. But just then the daughter slipped timidly to his side. She threw her arms about his neck, and kissed his brow; and then, sobbing silently, she knelt beside him.

## CHAPTER X.

"I AM A WARWICK, SIR. THE HONOR OF MY  
FATHER IS AT STAKE."

WARWICK was speaking to his daughter as he had never done before. A kerosene lamp, turned low, and a candle shed a dim light about the apartment, just light enough to make more impressive the scene. Where shadow met shadow there was darkness; where lamp and candle ray crossed each other, just light enough to show outline, but not color. Just enough of shade and glimmer were commingled to breed mystic thought and to conjure moods that never come in either deep darkness or bright light.

"My daughter," Warwick was saying, "the Book of Life offers consolation to mankind. It is 'abundant in goodness and truth,' and yet in trial such as this I, a student of the Word, long to speak to *human* ear. My soul craves the touch of human sympathy. To you, then, my daughter,

I, your dishonored father, shall pour out my words, asking you only to listen. A stain now rests on the name you bear. To-day began your father's humiliation; to-night may complete it.”

“The dream, father; the dream.”

“Think not of such trivial things. Remember, ‘tribulation worketh patience.’” Then he continued:

“To-morrow and hereafter when men meet Warwick he will turn his head and cast down his eyes, for deep must be the shame of him who until this day could look the whole world in the face. Listen, child. Two weeks ago there came to me in this room a man, to whom I pledged my word, and that means my life, if necessary. I swore to him that to-night I would be in this room, waiting for him to knock at that door. It was an oath, child. A Warwick never yet broke an oath, and that is why I bowed my knee to the tyrant Burbridge. The honor of your father demanded that he be here to-night; and yet to be here brought your father shame, disgrace, dishonor. But let that pass. It was destined either to be shame and disgrace only or, added to both shame and disgrace, the sin of a broken oath. To-night

the man will come again. You well know him, daughter."

Warwick stopped abruptly, and after a moment of meditation his daughter said:

"There is more to tell, father."

"Yes. To-night Dr. John comes to ask my aid in this matter, that I now must needs turn from, for by that cursed oath of Burbridge I swore to hold my hand from giving aid or succor to kin or friend who needs help, if he be for the South; and this man who comes to-night is of the South."

"Who is he, father?"

"That I do not know, only that he is one high in the Confederacy's cause; perhaps an escaped prisoner, perhaps a civilian holding a position of trust, perhaps he is an emissary to our friends in the North, I know not who or what. This only do I know, that in the presence of Dr. John I swore before the great God that I would be here to-night to receive him. Said the doctor to me: 'Hide him well in the knobs. Hide him where neither Home Guards nor provost-marshal can find track or evidence of him; where neither the followers of Burbridge nor of Burbank can trace him.



Attend well to his wants; and, if necessary, fight before harm comes to him.' "

"And you promised, father?"

"No. The Lord spared me that. I promised only to be here to-night."

The speaker rose, and tramped back and forth across the room; the double shadows played upon the ceiling, the floor, the walls—weird shadows that crossed each other and disappeared to revive again as the moving form of the disturbed man cut lamplight or candle-light or the blended light of both. At length he stopped.

"Go to your room, child, to your room. My mind is easier now that I have told of the wrong I have done in order to evade the wrongs I have not done. Go to bed, daughter."

Warwick stooped and tenderly kissed his daughter's forehead, a thing he had not often done before. Taking the candle, the girl left him standing in the light of the dim lamp. Soon, however, he was again striding back and forth across the floor, nursing his thoughts and waiting for that double knock upon the door. Thus Warwick waited and walked, waited and prayed, waited and trusted.

Just when midnight struck there came the tramp of horses' feet, and the expected knock sounded on the front door, which Warwick immediately opened. As he did so the door behind him cautiously moved; and as his midnight guests stepped into the front of the room his daughter, unobserved, slipped in from behind.

One of the men was Dr. John, the other was hidden in wraps; scarcely could his eyes be seen. Standing in the shadows, he seemed intent on evading the light.

"Be seated, John," said Warwick.

"First let me introduce my friend. Mr. Warwick, this is Gen—"

"Stop!" interrupted the hearer. "Dr. John, I must not learn that name."

The physician turned upon him. "This from you, Warwick?"

"And more, John. I gave my word that I would be here to-night, and I am here, but not the Warwick you knew of old. Seek elsewhere for aid. I must not give it. Farewell, John, farewell. Lose no time." He pointed to the door.

"Warwick, you led me to believe in your

ability, in your faith, in your patriotism; and now, after the great sacrifice is made, when success depends on your carrying out your part of the compact, you point to the door. Midnight is past. Long since the word has been spread abroad that the plot in which you are concerned has led to the escape of him who comes to you for help. Home Guard and cavalryman, scout and detective, are now on the alert, for a foremost officer of the Confederacy that you once claimed to love has escaped his guardsmen. He is in your home, danger closes in on all sides; and now—now, at the critical moment—you, Warwick, turn your back to the solemn trust you took, and turn your guest away.”

In silence Warwick stood, but his clenching hands evidenced the intensity of his passions.

“Shame on you, Warwick; shame be on your head and name.” The doctor spoke vehemently, but Warwick, true to his oath, gave no sign of relenting.

“John,” he said, “you have spoken bitter words, but true ones. Shame does rest on the head of Warwick; disgrace must cling to the name of his children. I gave you my word of

honor, and to save that word I am here; but, in order that I might be here, I was forced to pledge myself to give no aid to man or men of the Confederacy. That oath is sacred. Unaided by me, you must go from my door, even though it be to death."

"Warwick, when last I stood in this room these words concerning this friend passed between us. You asked: 'Is he worth a life?' 'Yes.' 'Warwick's?' 'Yes.' 'You may bring him. I promise that the Monday night following the first Sunday that follows the first Saturday Warwick will be in this room, listening for the tap on the door. I swear it, John.' "

"Am I not here? And as for the life of Warwick, take it if you will. Small account it is now to me. John, since last I saw you in this room I have taken the iron-clad oath of Burbridge. Need I say more? The minutes pass while you idly talk; they are precious to you and to him beside you. Even now the bluecoats may be about you. Go, John, seek another guide, another place of concealment."

"It is too late," said the physician in a voice of despair. "Your son Joshua, Warwick; where is he?"

“Gone,” said Warwick; “gone I know not where. When he learned of his father’s dishonor he turned from the house of his birth. I know not when he will return, if ever. Haste, John, away, away; no help can you get this night from the house of Warwick; and God knows you need help now.”

But just then the girl, who to this moment shrank unseen in the shadows, stepped before her father. Her uplifted face shone brave and calm in the dim light.

“I am of the house of Warwick. I will guide you to the cliffs.”

The interruption came so unexpectedly that it silenced the physician and astounded the father.

For the first time the stranger spoke. He alone seemed cool and at ease.

“I understand that the way to the cliffs is dangerous, and that even in daylight few persons care to go into those wilds.”

“I know the way, sir.”

“But the danger?”

“I am a Warwick, sir. The honor of my father is at stake.”

“You cannot go. It must never be said that

John Morgan, even to save his life, permitted one like you to risk a danger like this."

The girl kneeled beside the stranger, and, taking his hand, pressed it to her lips.

"General Morgan? Is this General John Morgan in our home? God bless you, sir. I *can* save you; come to the cliffs, to the cliffs before it is too late."

"Child," said the soldier, raising the girl to her feet—"child, the risk to you is great, too great."

"I know the path even better than my father does. I have taken no oath. I will save the honor of my father. Let me guide you to the great cavern under the cliff; and, once there, you shall need nothing, for Joshua will return when morning comes, and bring you food."

"But the danger to you, child. Think of the danger," said Morgan.

"My brothers, sir; two of them are Morgan's men. Need I say more?"

"Shall I go?" said the general, turning to the doctor.

"Yes. She is to be trusted; she knows the knobs. True, she runs a risk, but—"

“I run no risk, sir. I am prepared. See!”  
The girl took from beneath her shawl a revolver.  
“This I shall use if necessary. There is no danger, sir.”

“Lead on, child;” and from the house John Morgan passed that night, led by this child, who, when no cause was at stake, recoiled from a clap of thunder, but faced now the forest wilds of the Gunpowder cliffs and knobs in behalf of the chief whom her brothers followed to battle.

It was the gray of the morning when the girl returned. Her garments were torn and tattered, her hair was dishevelled, her hands and feet were lacerated, for briars and thorns lock themselves close together over those Gunpowder thicket paths. In the gray of the morning she came back to her home; but just before reaching the house, where she hoped, unseen, to slip into her room, a side door opened, and the guest from the North stood before her.

Without a word, like a frightened fawn, the surprised child sprang past him and ran into the house, going directly to the room where she had left her father.

Warwick sat in his chair; the lamp still burned

on the stand by his side. Its rays fell upon the open Bible in his lap, where could be read the passage: "Thou art my hope, O Lord God. Thou art my trust from my youth." But the trials of two nights had borne heavily; the minister was sleeping.

The girl slipped to his side, blew out the lamp, pulled down the curtain, pressed her father's forehead with a light kiss, and then softly left the room.







## CHAPTER XI.

### THAT JOHN MORGAN MIGHT LIVE. A WARWICK'S SACRIFICE.

JOSHUA returned in time for breakfast. He made no reference to the cause of his absence, or to where he had spent the night. The scratches on the hands and face of his sister could not be hidden, but no comment was made concerning them. Lionel had returned from his early walk; Warwick once more sat at the head of the table. The family circle was again complete. As usual, Warwick opened the morning meal with an offering of thanks to the Giver of all blessings; no evidence of discontent with his lot could be gathered from tone or word. Once again he was the ruler of the home where every thought was directed to the wearing of a crown in a future heaven, but where frivolity and amusement on the earth of the present were considered breeders of eternal frowns from Him who

ruled both above and below. The meal was finished in comparative silence.

As soon as possible after breakfast Mary sought her brother.

"Joshua, you were not at home last night."

"I told you thet I would be back this mornin'."

"Why did you leave so suddenly after father returned?"

"Sis, if you'll keep a secret, I'll tell you; but mum's the word now thet pap's taken the oath."

"I am to be trusted, Joshua; you know I am."

"Yisterday as I got to the end of the row of corn I was cutting next the thicket I heard a whis'le. It was the whis'le brother used to call me by when I was a little tot—Brother Samuel, who is with Morgan. You bet I was 'sprized, but I didn't let on. I jest answered back without turnin' my head, and then I worked my way to the top of the ridge to see ef any one war watchin' me. You see, sis, I ain't too sure of thet rock-hunter from the North. But thar wan't no one in sight, so I jest worked back, and then slipped over the fence into the thicket. Thar sat brother on a stump. He looked monstrous thin, and his head was shaved like a baby's. I knew

that it wan't no time fer words, and I jest said so. Then I asked what war to be done.

“‘General Morgan has 'scaped from the Columbus Penitentiary,’ says he, ‘and Capt’n Hines and I got away with him. We separated; he crossed the Ohio at Ludlow, while I went down to Anderson’s Ferry, fer it isn’t safe fer so many to be together. I know the land, and kept out of sight. The woods is thick and bushes close. I got here early this mornin’ without a soul seein’ me. Tell father thet I’ll slip into my room to-night, and, Joshua, bring me somethin’ to eat. I’m as hungry as a bear.’

“I started off, when he called me back. ‘How’s sister?’ he asked. ‘She’s well, and growin’ mighty fast. You’ll be proud of sis, brother.’ He drew his sleeve across his eyes. If he’d been a woman, instead of a man, I’d hev thought he war wantin’ to cry.

“‘Joshua,’ he said, ‘I wants ter see sister powerful much. I’ve been in a lot of hot times since I jined Morgan, and have suffered mightily, and the end ain’t yet. But I couldn’t go back South without seein’ sister ag’in, and thet’s why I run this risk. Tell her thet I’ve got the little rebel

flag she made me and give me the night I slipped away. I stuffed it into my cheek when the Yanks captured us; they thought it war terbacker.'

"I started off ag'in, and he called me back. 'Bring me a gun and pistol and some cartridges, and don't fergit somethin' ter eat,' he said. Wall, sis, he eat a pile and then felt better.

" 'How's father?' he asked.

" 'I don't know, fer he ain't home. The old devil in blue caught him Sunday and took him to jail; guess he'll be taken to Camp Chase to-night lessen he takes the oath.'

" 'He'll never taken thet oath,' says brother; 'thet's settled. Did you see sis?' he asked.

" 'No. She was not in the house.'

" 'Tell her I'll be home to-night after midnight.'

" 'What's new?'

" 'Nuthin'. Half the young fellers are in the Yankee army and half are with the rebels. Half the old men are watchin' the Home Guards, and the other half are laying quiet. We've got a boarder, a rock-hunter from the North. He's in your room, too. He takes me fer a greeny, and I guess I am one es he sees things; but we'll both

wait till terbacker's in the barn before we counts the hands. He's got his eye on me, and I'm watchin' him.'

" 'I'll be home at midnight,' says brother, 'after the rock-hunter's asleep.'

"Then he slipped into the thicket, and I went to work. When pap came home last night I knew somethin' hed gone wrong. When he said he had taken the oath I knowed the devil was to pay. Thet oath of Burbridge makes a man swear he'll drive his own kin away and report his own son.

"Thet's why I left the room so sudden. Ef pap says he'll do et, he will; and ef he swore he would report his own boy, he'd git on his horse and ride to the county seat without his breakfast to do et.

"I was in a fix. Brother hadn't told me where he intended to hide, and I didn't know where to hunt. I looked everywhere, fer I wanted to tell him to keep away from home, but it wan't any use. Before midnight I got awful blue, and went down to the thicket and waited. He didn't come. When I come back it was after twelve, but pap was up readin'. I looked through the winder at him. Then I went to the thicket and whis'led

and whis'led. No answer. I walked one place and another, but no brother showed up. I've been out all night, sis. He didn't come back."

Mary turned as white as death; her voice trembled strangely as she asked:

"Did you go to the cliffs?"

"No. Fer them's too far fer him to hev sneaked. He didn't need to go half a mile from here, fer nobody was looking fer him."

The girl clasped her hands. Her face was drawn and ghastly. Her eyes were staring, as if she saw some horrid thing. "Joshua, Brother Samuel will never come again, never, never." She took him by the arm. "Come, let us find father."

There was that in her voice which smote the awkward boy to his heart, and filled him with a strange dread. Together they went to the house, and entered their father's room.

"Listen, father," said the girl. "Listen to what I have to tell about my trip last night."

"About your trip last night," said Joshua; "I didn't know you made a trip."

"When you looked through the window after midnight I was gone."



"Who went with you, sis?" said Joshua suspiciously. There wan't no one home but pap, the old niggers and the rock-hunter. Who went out with you after midnight?"

"Let me tell my story."

"Go on, daughter," said Warwick.

"I shall tell it from the beginning. We left the house together, General Morgan and I. The night was cold. We trudged through the long, wet, dead grass. Drops of water scattered from the bushes over our heads.

"It was not completely dark, for the moon shone dimly through the treetops, though it was too young to give much light. We heard the hoot-owl crying from down in the Gunpowder ravines, toward where we had to go. I thought the Yankees would surely hear him hoot at us. There were other sounds and other voices too. I thought of what you read out of the Bible. I saw the 'beasts full of eyes before and behind'; eyes were everywhere—beasts with faces like men and six wings; beasts full of eyes and with hundreds of feet and wings; beasts with faces like a calf, and others with faces like lions. Oh, father, but I saw all you read about in that horrible story in the Bible."

"Child," interrupted Warwick, "this is blasphemy. Continue your story, leave the Word to me."

"We went on, down into the deep gulch. That dark hole was like a bottomless pit. I went in front, beating down the briars that hung over the path. Up, out of the creek, up and on, until the moon again came from behind the hill, and then—"

The girl stopped, and there came again over her face the look of horror.

"And then what, daughter?"

"A man rose up before us—a man with a gun in his hand. I saw it glitter in the moonlight; I saw its muzzle pointing at us. The man was standing between the moon and ourselves. I did not know him then, but I know him now. And then—"

"What, girl?"

"I drew my pistol from beneath my shawl, and fired it quick; fired it at the man who stood ready to shoot us down. This is what war brings to us, my father—to us who live here in Stringtown County; to shoot first or die first, my father. Would to God I had been the one to die!"

"The story."

"We went on, for the man disappeared as if he had melted away; on and on, to the cliffs. There I left the friend I had guided in safety; there I left him, promising to send Joshua to-day with food. I came back alone through the night. Oh, the awful creatures—beasts, devils—that rose up, that flew overhead, that crouched before and behind me! I ran through the briers, through the bushes, over the hills; the claws of the wild beasts touched my dress and tore it; the claws of the devils reached out for my face and arms and limbs, and scraped the skin until the blood came, but I got home at last—home; and, my father, your honor was saved; the name of Warwick, my father."

"And this is all you have to say?"

"No." Joshua spoke now. "No, pap, I have this to say: In case the man my sister shot is Brother Samuel, he would not have been shot had you not taken that oath of Burbridge."

Warwick rose up. "Samuel? Why do you say Samuel?"

"Because with General Morgan he escaped from the Columbus Penitentiary; because in the

back thicket yesterday he left me, promising to come last night to our house jest after midnight; because had you not taken that oath, *you* would have guided John Morgan, and my sister need not have tramped in the night, pistol in hand, to shoot down whoever stood in the path."

A look of terrible anguish overspread the face of Warwick.

"Samuel shot, and by his sister's hand, because of the oath I took to save the honor of Warwick? Samuel, my boy, my boy! Woe is me; sorrow and grief are my lot; rough is the path my feet were foreordained to walk. Yet must I not fail in faith because of trials of the flesh. Oh, my children, know ye not that sorrow must come into the life of man? Does not the Good Book teach, 'I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me'?"

Then, in spite of his religious zeal, he strode back and forth, seemingly overwhelmed by his pent-up emotions. But, suddenly stopping, he turned and cried:

"Away to the cliff. The man may not be dead; he may not be Samuel. Follow me, my

children. Oath or no oath, if it be my son Samuel, to this home shall he come, alive or dead."

He shook his clenched fist above his head, his knuckles striking the ceiling.

"Even though Burbridge hang me to a limb the next day, oath or no oath, I'll care for my son, who came into my life before I was forced to take the cursed oath."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A LETTER.

“MY DEAR CHARLEY: The ominous signs about which I told you in my last letter have materialized. These people begin to concern me more than I could have believed possible. They are a study, an enigma, a living puzzle. I am treated kindly, courteously, given every attention, and yet I now realize that I am held at arm's length. Things before my eyes are but half seen; the other half I know nothing about, nor can my questions bring an answer.

“Old man Warwick works and prays and preaches, quotes Scripture and sings psalms; but I half believe he does some things he does not pray about audibly, and it is evident the others, too, are concerned in matters that are covered from me. It seems like a novel story, in which

a plot is so carefully guarded as to exasperate, instead of satisfying, the reader. But before vacation is over I'll get—oh, well, I'll write it then and I'll write also about a bed of coprolites I have discovered.

"But I must tell you about this clown of a boy. Ha, ha! If I could only get him North with us for one day what fun we would have! He's a gawk; you ought to see him. The other day I crossed over to where he was suckering tobacco.

" 'Joshua,' I said, 'if you ever visit me up North we'll have a lot of fun.' He looked up and drawled out:

" 'Pap preached 'bout a feller named Samson, who made fun fer jest sech a set of folks. You'd better let me stay in the terbacker patch and work, fer I mought not make the kind of fun you want.'

"I could not make out whether the clown was in earnest or talking at random, so I just took out one of my cards and I flipped it at him.

" 'That's my address, Joshua; glad to see you when you come; and if you propose to play Samson, do not cut your hair.'

"Last week things were dreadfully mixed here. One of Warwick's sons was found dead in the

hills. He had been shot through the heart. The strange part of it is that no effort was made to discover the murderer.

“‘Joshua,’ I said, ‘do you not suspect any person?’

“‘Ef I do, I don’t talk. These ain’t times to talk.’

“Not another word could I draw from him.

“Oh, yes! I forgot to say that this son was a rebel soldier, one of Morgan’s cavalrymen, who recently escaped from Columbus Penitentiary. His father preached the funeral sermon, and as far as I could determine preached him to the devil. The daughter sorrows deeply. She made no outcry, no demonstration; but she seemed dazed, and has not been herself since.

“‘Miss Warwick,’ I said yesterday, ‘your brother was a soldier. Those who go into the war risk their lives. Is it wise to grieve unreasonably even for one as dear as a brother?’

“She turned her eyes upon me in a way I cannot find words to express.

“‘He did not die on the field of battle. Would to God it had been so. Did you know all—’ then she stopped.



“ ‘But, Miss Warwick, *you* are not to blame, because—’

“ ‘Hush!’ she interrupted, ‘do not speak to me of things I know better than do you, nor is it wise for you to mix in affairs that do not concern you. Happy are you people of the North who see no war, whose brothers march forth in open day, whose sisters need not listen in the night for a brother’s tap on the door, and listen in vain, as I have done.’

“ ‘But, Miss Warwick, we have our part in the war. Our loved ones go out to fight and suffer and die.’

“ ‘To you of the North war is something afar; to us war is at our doors night and day. God only knows what will come next.’

“Charley, the more I see of this girl, the more convinced I am that she should see something of the world. It is a shame to hide a creature like this in these woods among these hills. Isn’t it strange, a pretty woman is bewitching when she smiles, captivating when she laughs, and charming when, without smile or laugh, she looks you in the eye. But when the teardrop touches her

cheek, words cannot define the fascination, and I'll not attempt it.

"Charley, this girl of Warwick's is a mountain flower, be she in the sunshine or the shadow. But you know my failing and— Oh, well, it isn't likely she and I will ever get closer than across the table.

"LIONEL.

"P. S.—If God made man, and is all-seeing and all-powerful, He knows what man's every action will be. If He knows this, and permits him to do things He does not like, and damns him eternally for doing what, in infinite wisdom, He could have prevented, who is to blame? Eh?

"Come another way. If God made man, and knew all things to come for all time, He knew just what every man would do. If He knew this, and does not prevent his doing things He disapproves of, man does these things by God's consent, and, hence, is not responsible. See?

"Or again. 'If God made man, and knew all things and planned all things in the beginning, He laid down what must be done; and, hence, man can only do what God foreordained he should do.' This last is the substance of War-

wick's text every Sunday, as well as his creed the week through; and if the occasion ever requires, I'll pull it on him.

"L."

## CHAPTER XIII.

“ONCE MORE THE SHADOWS FLICKERED.”

FOR a time over the home on the knob the days passed as pass the days of a calm that sometimes follows one storm period and precedes another. Lionel studied his rocks and collected specimens, Joshua cut and hung his tobacco, and his father, as usual, both preached and worked. The girl became gradually more reconciled to the death of her brother, and Warwick seemed to take less to heart the odium that rested on his name because of that humiliating oath. But the Home Guards still rode over the hill roads, and beat the bushes by their sides; many were the residents of Stringtown County who slept more frequently out of doors than in the house. But Warwick gave these things no further concern, nor was he again disturbed by the Home Guards. Seemingly the trials of this man of God were at an end. And

that Warwick thought so, too, was shown by his selection of the morning and evening Scriptural verses.

Had the old man, however, studied his Bible less, and thought more of earthly than of spiritual things, he would have noticed the change that came over his daughter, who no longer seemed to shun the visitor from the North. He would have seen that she was becoming interested in the fossil stones and in the mammoth bones, and that she often walked to the road to bid the naturalist good-by in the morning, and that in the evening she often met him on his return.

But if Warwick did not observe these changes, Joshua did, for one day the boy said to his father:

“ ‘Pears to me thet sis is behavin’ different of late.”

“I see nothing out of the way. She goes to church Sunday, she attends to affairs of the home week days, she asks to go to no parties or picnics or other places where the devil lurks, she does not sulk, and has no grievance.”

Joshua looked at his father, and spoke hesitatingly, as if undecided just how far he could venture.

"Ef you will raise your eyes from the text once in a while, you'll catch a glimpse of things you can't read in print."

"I read the Bible. Nothing that occurs to-day can add to or take from the value of the Word. It is of your sister you speak. Listen to the psalmist's promise." The man placed his finger on the passage that chanced then to be before his eyes, and read aloud:

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early."

"I take it, pap, thet the feller what did that writin' died too long ago to tell you 'bout things thet consarn us here in Stringtown County to-day. There's no use in tryin' ter strip and hand terbacker when et ain't in case, but when et comes in case et kin be worked mighty easy. 'Pears to me thet things are gettin' monstrous soft hereabouts; and ef you ain't keerful, the terbacker in the barn 'll not be the only thing in case when Christmas comes. You say sister 'll be helped 'right early.' Well, it 'pears so to me."

"Go to your work, Joshua. If you would study your Bible more and think less of worldly matters, it would be better. Go to your work, sir."

As the days passed the words of Joshua concerning the girl's "softening" seemed to be destined for fulfilment. The girl did soften. Her eyes told that her interest in the guest had deepened into something more; her conversation with Lionel was not now altogether about the fossil stones and prehistoric bones of Stringtown County.

Lionel was not long in perceiving the change that came to this girl who never even attended one of the neighborhood picnics, who had pleaded vainly to be allowed to join a party of frolicking young people bound for a pleasure jaunt at Big Bone Springs; who, whenever such desires were expressed, had been told to read her Bible and shun the wiles of the devil. Beneath the very eye of the father who, when at home, sat studying his book, thinking of his sermon, Lionel told Mary about other scenes, and pictured to her the pleasures that came to those who were not forced to forego the joys of life—joys that should come to all who pass from childhood into womanhood. But not a word did he say against her father's religion and her own.

Only life's bright side, its joyous side—the

side that enraptures the mind of the unwary—was held before her in glowing colors. She was taught to contrast her own lot with that of other girls; to contrast the methods of her father and that of other fathers. But, while the two were thus drawing closer to each other, unobserved by the man whose duty led him to search the Scriptures and neglect his daughter, the brother was less religious and less blind.

One day Joshua abruptly left the tobacco barn, and turned his steps toward the localities where Lionel spent his time in search of specimens; toward the spot where that morning from a knob Joshua had seen him breaking stones. The meeting was unexpected to Lionel.

“That you, Joshua?”

“Yes, and I’m here fer bus’ness. I hain’t goin’ ter beat ’round the bush, neither. You come here to study rocks vacation time, you say?”

“Yes, Joshua, that’s my business.”

“School begun two months ago. When does vacation end?” The words were direct. Lionel saw the boy had more to say.

“Go on, Joshua.”

“I don’t intend to ask nuthin’ wrong. But you



ain't studyin' rocks like you did at first. You ain't of our people, and never will be. That's what I come to say."

"True, Joshua, I am not related to you, but that need not disturb either of us."

"Ef you stay here much longer, there may be trouble thet you don't expect. It may not be perlite, but it is bus'ness fer me to say thet vacation times are over, and I don't mean any wrong when I says it."

"You think, Joshua, I had better return to college?"

"Exactly."

"Well, I have arranged to leave next week. Can you take my collection of specimens to Covington?"

"I'll haul it the day you pick out; and the quicker, the better."

"Next week, Tuesday, Joshua, will suit me," was the reply.

"Thank you, sir. Don't tell pap 'bout our talk. I don't mean no harm er not ter be perlite, but we Stringtown County people treats the stranger fair; and I jest thought et war 'bout time fer vacation ter end."

The following Sunday Warwick left home for a few days' absence, attending an association in the beech woods on the Stringtown Pike. Two days later Joshua loaded Lionel's geological specimens, and started to Covington with them early in the morning. But the roads out of the knobs are rough, the Gunpowder and Big Bone hills are steep, the load was heavy, the horses that hauled the lumber wagon down the pike moved slowly, and it was late at night when Joshua returned. He unhitched his team, turned them into the back pasture, and quietly slipped into his room, so as not to disturb the sleepers.

Next morning when he appeared the breakfast-table was spread for but one person; the old black woman was in waiting. The heart of the boy that Lionel called a "gump" sank.

"Where's sister?"

The old woman turned in surprise.

"Yo' know she went to the 'sociation."

"When?"

"Yisterdy mahn'n'."

"Who went with her?"

"Ma'se Lionel."

"How did they go?"

"In the buggy."

For a moment the listener sat in silence; then he muttered: "Pap's book war right when it said she would be helped 'right early.' "

In silence he stoically ate his breakfast. If his mind was active, no facial expression indicated the fact. Indeed, he seemed actually unconcerned about the news that to him so unexpectedly told of his sister's elopement.

Before breakfast was over the old negress announced that a man was coming toward the house from off the creek road—"a man in blue," she added. Joshua started up at once. That final sentence produced in him an unpleasant sensation. He stepped to the door. About half-way up the hill a Federal soldier was riding leisurely. His horse seemed spiritless, the rider indifferent to surroundings. He was unarmed. That he was not a Home Guard was evident.

For a moment Joshua was undecided. Should he go out of the back door and into the thicket, or stay and meet the intruder? Then, making up his mind, he advanced to the front gate.

"Does Preacher Warwick live here?"

"Yes, sir."

"May I see him?"

"He's not at home."

The man reflected.

"When will he return?"

"I can't say." Joshua did not ask the cavalryman to alight. He did not care for his company.

"I have a message for Mr. Warwick."

"Ef you'll tell me, I'll tell pap."

"You are his son?"

"Yes."

"It concerns him. I am to deliver it to your father. Can you not tell me when you expect him home?"

"He's gone to the 'sociation. It lets out to-day. He'll be home to-night."

"I shall wait, for I must speak to Mr. Warwick."

"Breakfast's jest ready, and you're welcome to stay. I hope you hev brought good news."

The traveller dismounted, and Joshua led his horse to the stable, and there to himself finished the sentence. "But ef you hev good news, et's mo'ne any bluecoat ever yit brought to any Warwick."

The soldier ate his breakfast, drew a pipe, made

himself comfortable, and waited for Warwick, who did not come until the sun had gone down and Joshua had come in from the barn and the evening meal had been placed on the table.

After supper the three men sat together in the common sitting-room. If Warwick had observed the absence of either his daughter or the naturalist, he made no reference to the fact; the lamp burned dimly; once more the shadows flickered.

## CHAPTER XIV.

"TELL MY FATHER THAT I STOOD AS A WARWICK SHOULD, AND DIED AS A WARWICK SHOULD DIE."

"MR. WARWICK, you had a son in the Confederate army, had you not?"

"I had two sons in the service of the Confederacy. One lies now in the graveyard on the hill, the other still serves the South."

"One lies in the graveyard on the hill? Which hill?"

"The knob beside Old Gunpowder, sir. Six weeks ago we buried him."

"We do not refer to the same son, Mr. Warwick. The man I knew does not lie in your graveyard on Gunpowder Hill." Then he changed the subject. "Let me tell my story, Mr. Warwick."

He paused for a moment, began his tale, and soon was in the midst of it.

"Back and forth," he was saying, "the blue and

gray scouts had seesawed; back when the rebels pressed hard, and out again when the North was strongest; back and forth until the rebels were reinforced, until their cavalry outnumbered the Federals', until John Morgan cut in behind the Northern infantry, until the Federal general, Morgan, retreated from Cumberland Gap, until Bragg forced Buell far into Kentucky. Steadily back the Northern forces were pushed, fighting their way, burying their dead, carrying their wounded, or leaving them to the care of farmers; until General Heath drove in the pickets beneath the guns of old Fort Mitchell, on the height back of Covington. But at last the tide turned; the feint on Cincinnati by General Heath's six thousand men was a thing of the past; the battles of Perryville and the vacillating methods of General Bragg left him broken in strength."

The speaker stopped for a moment, and turned his eyes on Warwick.

"Your sons, Ezra and Samuel, joined the rebels during that Kirby Smith raid, Mr. Warwick. When the Confederates left the State of Kentucky that fall of 1862, your boys were under Morgan's command."

"You speak correctly, sir. Then it was they entered the service of the Confederacy."

"The next June, last June, they came again to Kentucky. The great raid into Ohio was inaugurated. You know the rest. John Morgan became a prisoner. Success was with the Union arms. But between September, 1862, and June, 1863, occurred an incident that I can never forget."

He shuddered and pressed his hand to his forehead.

"Why do you say the 'Confederates' and the 'Federals'? Why do you not say the Confederates and ourselves?" asked Warwick. The speaker dropped his eyes again and continued, but not in reply to Warwick's question.

"The men who fight battles, be they dressed in blue or in gray, be they, as were we, clad in rags and shoeless and hungry, are men, and respect each the other, be they clad in gray or in blue. Worn out were we, long had been our march up from the South into this land of Kentucky."

"Down from the North, you mean, sir; those who wear the blue come not from the South." Warwick touched the sleeve of his guest.



But the speaker continued. “That was a valiant fight, Mr. Warwick. The enemy was before us, the enemy was behind, to the right and to the left, on every cross-road, every pike, on every hill and in every valley. Morning brought to our ears the crack of muskets; and every hour from the rise and setting of the sun came the bullet from the gun of the invaders of our homes.”

Then Warwick interrupted. “Sir, the homes of those who live north of the Ohio River are not invaded.”

“Nor did I say they were. Be patient. As I say, we fought and prayed. Lines of muskets were before us, cannon were behind us, troops of cavalry, regiments, brigades, divisions of infantry, were east and west and north and south of us. We rose from the ground in the morning to meet a line of steel, and from the clouds of smoke overhead there came sheets of lead and iron balls. The earth was furrowed all about us; the trees were cut above us, and the limbs were falling upon our heads. The devil stood behind that line of blue which, hidden in smoke, cut us down; we were helpless, we had neither powder, nor ball, nor food, nor—”

Warwick rose. He placed his hands one on either shoulder of the speaker, and pressing hard thereon looked him in the eyes.

"Why do you say the devil stood behind that line of *blue*, you who wear the blue?"

"Because then I wore the gray; because to meet you, Mr. Warwick, to say what I have said and to tell you more that yet I must say, led me to wear this suit of blue. I fought beside your son Ezra."

"Tell me of him."

"Flesh and blood could not stand the storm of lead and iron that closed us in and mowed us down; we had neither food nor cover, medicine nor ammunition; our bayonets were not long enough to reach the men who stood behind those lines of living steel, much less to reach the cannon, that from afar dropped bombs and balls at will. I fought beside your son, Ezra Warwick. We fought until our last charge of powder was burned, until surrounded we stood in silence while that sheet of flame mowed us down like birds in a trap."

"Tell me all you have to say about my son."

"He was a brave man, Mr. Warwick, an honor to the name. When our last charge of powder

was burned he turned to me and said: ‘Comrade, should you get out alive, tell my father, Preacher Warwick of the Knobs, that I stood as a Warwick should, and died as a Warwick should die.’”

“Then he was one who fell?”

“Would to God, Mr. Warwick, I could say yes; would that he had fallen then.”

“Go on. Tell me what you have to say,” said Warwick hoarsely.

“Are you strong enough to hear the ending of my story?”

“Speak. ‘The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?’ ”

“Wounded men were about us, men who lay for hours and watched their blood drip, drip, drip; and men, too, who felt the bullet’s touch and saw the crimson stream spurt and felt the life current slipping swiftly. These last were the happier, for here death came quickly. Finally, our silence, told the enemy that we had no powder; the wounded about us outnumbered the dead two to one, and the dead twice outnumbered those untouched by lead or iron ball.” And again the speaker pressed his hands to his forehead.

“And my boy? You said he was not killed?”

"He was not touched at all. His life seemed charmed. Unscathed he came out—he, myself and a few others. When the last ball was spent and the enemy closed in to where the few who were left stood upright among the dead and wounded, when the final Federal charge came and the foe burst upon us, I saw strong men in blue cover their eyes and turn their heads away. It was an awful sight, Warwick, even to those who know war. I saw kindly hands outstretched to us who lived; as if we had been brothers. Who could have thought that these same hands had made the carnage at our feet? But such is war."

"But what of my boy? These things need not be told. We can read of battle charges in every print that comes to hand. Tell me of my son Ezra."

"Be patient, Mr. Warwick."

"Is this a time for patience? Say the word you bring and end the tale."

"This, then, is the word. The army that had crushed our band moved on toward the South; we were sent back until our prison in Kentucky was reached. Here, by order of one whose name I need not tell, we were one morning drawn

up and told that, because of some bushwhackers' deeds of which we knew nothing, before the day had set a like number of Confederate prisoners must die. God! but we could not believe the words were earnest. Not long, however, were we left in doubt. The edict had gone forth, and that, too, by order of a son of Kentucky. And when we asked for justice, for the rights due a soldier, we were told that for every man the cowardly bushwhacker shot one of us must be sacrificed. Our names were written on slips and put into a hat, and a comrade of the men who were to die was forced to draw the lot—forced, I say, to draw the papers out and hear the names one by one read off, and see the man each paper named led out until the full quota were drawn and all stood up to die.”

“And my son?”

“He was blessed, as contrasted with the man who speaks to you.”

Warwick gazed intently at his guest. “What did my son do that he should be called blessed? What had you done to merit such words of shame?”

“Warwick, it was I who drew the papers from

the hat. It was I who drew the slip that bore the name of Ezra Warwick. My name, too, was in that hat. God! but I would that it could have touched my fingers first."

Not a muscle of Warwick's face moved.

"And my son Ezra stood in that line?"

"Yes."

"Is there more to tell?"

"No. I have fulfilled the promise made your boy. By the help of a generous Federal colonel who loaned me this suit of blue and gave me this horse, and paroled me on my honor to return, I am here to tell the father of my comrade that which I have said. To-morrow I must start back again."

Warwick, strong as was his faith, could not bear this stroke unmoved. His mind reverted, first, to the oath he had that summer taken, the oath of Burbridge; next, to his son who, near the path of Middlecreek, fell by the bullet of his sister because of that same oath. Now the other son was gone, shot down, a helpless prisoner. Back and forth in his chair the strong man swayed; then he turned a pitiful, helpless gaze on Joshua, who sat in the shadows.

“My son Ezra, my first-born son, is no more. God chasteneth me, His servant, near to the extent of human endurance. My God, my God, why afflictest Thou me so sorely? My son, my son!”

There was no reply.

Appealingly Warwick spoke again. “Joshua, I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Joshua, ask your sister to come to her father. I would feel her light hand upon my brow, I would have my daughter’s arms about my neck. Ask your sister to come and comfort her father, Joshua, my son.”

The boy made no movement.

“Your sister, boy. I am very lonely.”

“Pap,” said Joshua, and he moved over and took both his father’s hands, “Pap, I must be your comfort now. Sister’s gone away forever.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### "PAP'S HIMSELF AG'IN."

"FATHER," said Joshua, "thet rock-hunter came to us a stranger. You saved his life from the flood in the creek; you gave him a bed in our house; you trusted him."

"I trusted the Lord, my son."

"And what has the Lord done for you, father? While you prayed to the Lord, the rock-hunter was saying soft words to sister. You sang praises and psalms, and the rock-hunter sang love songs. You trusted the Lord and went to the 'sociation to preach the Lord's Word, and sister trusted the rock-hunter."

"Father," continued the boy, "et's tough to stand what you've stood and stick to the Lord through et all. First, the Home Guards marched into the meetin'-house, the Lord's own house, and



pulled you out. Next, they toted you to jail and made you took the iron-clad oath thet disgraced us all. Then you had to go back on General Morgan because of the oath; and because of et, too, sister went out in the night to do what she’d not hev had to do ef you hadn’t been so trustin’. Next, she shot brother Samuel through the heart. Now, brother Ezra’s murdered, shot like a pigeon, and sister’s lost forever. You’re trustin’ the Lord yet, pap. Isn’t it time to begin to trust in yourself, er in me?”

No reply came from the afflicted man; but his chest heaved heavily.

“I don’t mean no harm, pap, but I says thet et’s time now fer you to turn to yourself er to me. Go back with this man and git brother’s body, and let me go North and track thet rock-hunter. Let me find thet villain; trust now my arm and gun, fer, I says, now es the time to trust in powder and ball; now es the time to shoot.”

“Son,” Warwick said at last, “the girl you once called sister has deserted her home. She has abandoned her father in this, his day of trouble and distress; she has now no father, no brother—this girl you once called sister. My cup is full; no more shame, no more sorrow, can come to me.”

"Pap, I don't lay everything up ag'in sister, fer she's hed a monstrous lonely time here. I'll always call her sister, pap, and I'll have vengeance on thet sneak from the North."

"Pap"—and now Joshua spoke with even greater earnestness—"Pap, I heard you preach the text, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,' but ef sister ever asks et, so sure es God made Adam—and you've preached thet He did—I'll take my gun and go to her; and ef the Lord don't git His work in on thet rock-hunter quick, when He does git ready to move He'll hev to take His vengeance out on a dead rock-hunter. Them's my sentiments. And ef it turns out thet thet feller didn't marry sister Mary, es I take et he promised to do, er she'd never gone off with him, thar ain't air enough in this world fer both of us to breathe. Them's my words. You trust in the Lord gittin' His vengeance, and I hopes He will; and I'll trust in my gun, and betwixt us both I guess the Yankee stone-hunter'll hev a rocky old time of et. I'll jest wait until sister writes, er comes back, and then I'll start North." The boy took a revolver from his pocket and held it up.

"Pap, I don't mean no disrespect to nobody ner

nuthin’, but sech times es these are mighty tryin’. I swears by all the gods and devils your Bible tells ’bout—and et’s full of ’em—thet this gun shall avenge my sister, ef she needs her brother’s help.”

Warwick rose and strode the room. His forehead stood in ridges; the veins of his brow were like blue whip-cord. He stopped before his son and took the revolver in his hand, where it lay like a toy in his great palm. Then, thoughtfully looking at the weapon, he mused: “Yes, ‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord’; such a toy as this has no place in Warwick’s hand. It may be good enough for youngsters, or for men who know not such times as have come to the Warwicks of old in these Kentucky wilds—to a line of Warwicks whose honor I am bound to keep. But I’ll not trust a flimsy thing like this.”

Then he turned to his son: “If you fail, it’ll not be because you are afraid to shoot; no Warwick ever flinched in his hour of trial.”

The troubled man stopped short and again paced the little room—the room from which two sons had gone out to sacrifice and his only daughter to be sacrificed. Finally he stopped before his son:

"Joshua, if this man has ruined Mary and you fail to avenge her—" He stopped again.

"What, pap?"

"If you fail, my son, your childless old father will take that"—he pointed to a great gun that hung below the mantel—"and will start for the North. If my daughter be not a wife, and you fail, may the Lord God Almighty will that I, His servant, be the instrument through which vengeance shall fall on the miscreant's head."

He sank upon his knees beside a chair and rested his forehead on its arm. His thought reverted to his God, who did all things as all things should be done.

Joshua turned to the soldier, who had been an unwilling, and apparently unobserved, listener, and took him by the sleeve.

"Come, let's go. Pap's himself ag'in." Together they left the room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE RETURN OF SPRING.

THE days passed—the days that brought sleet and snow and frozen earth. The winds of winter blew from north and west, but not hard enough to keep Warwick from his church when came the first Sunday following the first Saturday. Nor could snow nor sleet nor swollen winter's torrent hold the man back—he who preached without pay, who worked his farm, and gave the returns thereof to the cause of the God he served.

The trials that had fallen so rapidly upon him did not in the least disturb his faith. The disgrace that came with Burbridge's oath left him as it found him, loyal to his charge. The pathetic loss of two sons, the desertion of his beloved daughter, served but to draw him nearer to God. More often than before was the sacred book upon

his knee; longer and more fervent were the blessings that he asked before each meal; louder sang he the evening and morning hymns. But yet the stern man of other days was softened somewhat in demeanor, as could have been noticed by contrasting with the present his austere methods at the time Lionel first came to the Knob. The family pride of the *man* was broken, but his spirit clung yet in unswerving faith to his God. And "knowing whom he believed," he never doubted that from the foundation of the world God had predestined that all these afflictions should be. Severe as had been the sacrifice and deep the sorrow, he believed with unswerving faith that all had been foreordained by Infinite Wisdom, and all was for the best.

Other men, weaker minds, might have reasoned or have tried to reason, and thus have been led by conceit and narrowness of intellect either to deny or curse the Creator, for no mental power could have helped any mind to find a touch of good in the misfortunes that within a few months' time had come to Warwick. To have questioned at all would have led the strongest, step by step, ultimately to cast his faith aside.

Not once did the name of his wayward daughter pass his lips, nor did Joshua again mention her. Yet recent events must have ever dominated their thought, for how, otherwise, could these two have brooded in the same room during the long winter evenings; how could they, three times a day, sit opposite each other at the table and not experience the sinking of soul that comes to father and brother under grief such as turns the heart to stone.

Then came the touch of spring. The snow that fell in the night melted with the morning; on the edges of the creek skims of ice yet formed when frost fell, but disappeared when the sun rose; the sap flowed into the maple when the soft wind blew; the smoke from the fire that boiled the tree syrup curled from many hillside camps. With the warmth of noonday the honey-bee awoke, and buzzed about the black sugar-tree trunk, and sipped the partly dried juice that gummed the edges of the buckeye trough; the squirrel lay outside in the old nest of leaves, and revelled in the sunshine when the wind was down and the day was bright. These were the never-failing signs of advancing spring.

During the soft wet days of the winter that had passed Joshua and his father had stripped the cured tobacco that, hanging in the barn, had turned from greenish yellow to brown. This had been wrapped into "hands," packed on wagons and taken to Covington down the Stringtown Pike along which Joshua so recently had hauled the fossil collection of the "rock-hunter." The days were lengthening fast. Plans had been made for the crop to come; a bit of new ground had been cleared of brush; the "plant-bed" on the south hillside in the deadening had been burned over and set in tobacco seed for the coming tobacco patch. During this approaching season of warmth, one Sabbath evening, Warwick and his son sat in their home; one intent on his Book, the other polishing a newly made hickory axe-handle.

Suddenly Joshua started up, and the axe-handle fell from his grasp; a shadow crossed the window, and a timid knock came at the door. Joshua opened it, and stood for a moment motionless. There, shrinking, stood a woman with bowed head and hands close pressed against her face, which was entirely hidden. Such a dress as she wore had never before been seen in the home of



Warwick; never had such garments clad a form on that Kentucky knob; a bonnet decked with tattered velvet. Misery spoke from each rag and tatter; the covered face betokened grief and shame. Kindly, in his homely way, Joshua spoke to the stranger.

“Won’t you come in, mam?”

The woman dropped her hands, raised her head, and as she did so Warwick lifted his eyes from the Book. They rested on the face of his daughter.

The three who had so abruptly met seemed transfixed; so suddenly had that face burst upon the men as to unnerve both. The girl, wan and desolate, stood again in the doorway of the old home. Joshua was the first to move. He reached out both his arms, and took the cold hands of his sister into his own great warm palms, and drew her into the room. Turning to his father, who, with Bible in hand, sat unmoved, the brother said:

“Pap, sister’s come home ag’in.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

“LET’S HAVE THE MERCY TEXT.”

WARWICK made no movement; no word of greeting came from his lips, no softening touch to his furrowed brow, no sparkle to his cold, gray eye. As though gazing upon a stranger, he sat and pierced the girl through and through with a formal stare, that drove despair deeper into her heart and caused her to cling closer to her brother.

“Pap, sister’s home ag’in,” the youth repeated.

“I know nothing of a sister who claims a home here.”

Mary would have fallen but for the strong arm of her brother, who gently, tenderly guided her to a great rocking-chair. Then he turned on his father.

“I said thet sister’s home ag’in, and I means it, pap.”

Turning the leaves of the Book to a familiar passage, Warwick read aloud:

“‘The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world.’ This girl has no home here. She is of the world.”

“Father, ef sister hes no home here, I hav’n’t none, either. Ef she must go out into the world, I’ll go with her.”

The man of God gazed sternly at the rebellious youth. Then he turned to the girl.

“The good Book says, ‘A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.’ ”

Joshua stepped between the two and hid the child from her father.

“Pap, thet book says tough things to-night. The text you preached from to-day was a better one. I remember et, and I’ll leave et to you ef I am not right. ‘I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever.’ Thet’s a better text, and I takes et, God was in a better humor when He wrote et.”

“Joshua!” spoke the father, shocked at his son’s irreverence.

“Listen, pap. I hate to say et, but I must. You

preached one thing this morning, and you acts another thing now. Didn't you say thet God 'retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy?' I may not hev the words right, but I've got the sense."

"My son!"

"Pap, I axes the question on the square. Ain't thet what you preached?"

"That was the text."

"It ain't fair to preach one text in the meetin'-house and act another text at home."

"Joshua!"

"Let's hev the mercy text to-night. Pap, sister's home ag'in. Let's act the fergivin' text out."

Joshua stepped aside and the minister, touched in spite of himself, glanced at his daughter, a softened glance, that spoke of affection, but he made no movement. Then the girl slowly rose and turned toward the door, still keeping her eyes on her father's face. She edged backward step by step toward the door by which she had entered. Her hand grasped the latch; the door moved on its hinges.

"Stop, sister," said Joshua. "Pap, ef sister opens thet door I go with her, and then you will

sit all alone in this room ferever. You will be the last Warwick of the Knob.”

Warwick, with all his coldness and strength, could not stand the ordeal.

“Come back, my children,” he said. “It is also written, ‘I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.’” And then, as in former times, Mary’s head rested on her father’s knee.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE STORY OF WARWICK'S DAUGHTER.

"WHENCE came you?"

"From the cliffs, father, said the girl.

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Tell us your story, daughter," said Warwick, and he reached out his hand and gently, as was his custom, stroked the hair of the wayward child who came as a refugee to her old home. "Tell your father what you have to say, for it now concerns both Joshua and me."

She had been quietly sobbing, and she raised her tear-stained face.

"Did you forget my dream of long ago, my father?" she asked softly.

"What dream?"

"Do you mind the day I stood by the road, that

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summer day when the young people passed to the picnic, the day the young man rode to my side while the girls and boys in the wagon chatted and laughed? Then it was the young man asked me to join the party. I told you all about it."

"What has this story of to-night to do with a dream of last summer?"

"I told you how I dreamed that mother came to my side and said, 'Tell your father that the passing of these young people will mark the beginning of his afflictions, unless he makes his God lovable, his religion enjoyable, his daughter's happiness one of his objects in life; unless—' "

"Stop. What has this to do with the story you have to tell? You mock me, girl."

"Father," interrupted Joshua, "et 'pears to me thet sister's beginnin' at the beginnin'. I says et ain't fair to make her try to tell a story and skip all but the last part of et. I wants ter hear et all."

"A dream begins in nothing and ends in nothing."

"That is what you said when once before I started to tell the dream. You would not let me tell it out. You stopped me before I came to what I wished to say."

"A dream begins in nothing and ends in nothing, I say."

The eyes of the girl were cast to the floor.

"Pap," urged Joshua, "a king of Egypt once dreamed a dream 'bout a famine." He pointed to the Bible in his father's hand. "Didn't God send thet dream, pap?"

"That was in the holy days of old, Joshua. Solomon has said, 'A dream cometh through the multitude of business.' "

"Pap, ef Pilate hed listened to the dream of his wife"—again Joshua pointed to the Bible—"wouldn't et have been better fer Christ? Thet dream was not so long ago, and, pap, I don't give no wife of Pilate a better right to dream than sister has, and I axes you the question square. Ef you don't listen to sister's dream, won't you be powerful like Pilate?"

"What has this story of to-night to do with a dream of last summer, Joshua?" asked the discomfited preacher.

"Let's hear the dream, and see what's in et. I can't tell till I hears et."

"You may tell the dream, Mary; but to dream is vanity, according to the Scriptures. It is writ-



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ten in Ecclesiasticus, 'For in the multitude of dreams, and many words, there are also divers vanities.' "

"Father," continued the girl, "as I told you once, this dream said that unless you did certain things your afflictions would begin. When, soon after that, you were arrested I thought of the dream you would not let me tell. When you took the oath, I thought of the dream. When you turned General Morgan from your door, you know why; when brother was shot on the cliff path, you know who shot him. I thought of the dream, for I had seen it all unfold before; I saw it in my dream, but just then I awoke; the rest of the dream was lost. Would that I could have dreamed to the end, and seen what was to come to me! My father, did not your afflictions begin the day I wanted to tell you what that dream predicted?"

"That day came the flood, which brought the first link in the chain of persecutions," mused Warwick. "Go on, child," he added.

The girl shuddered. "Yes, my father, *he* came that day."

A startled look overspread her face. Seemingly

affrighted at the word "he" and the accompanying recollections of the past, she arose, as if alarmed, and turned to the door.

"Let me go back," she cried, "back to the cliffs! With beasts and brutes belong such as I am now."

Warwick reached out his long arms and drew the sufferer to his breast. His Bible fell upon the floor, but the man did not heed the sacrilege. The book of his fate was beneath his feet; the girl of his heart was on his breast. For the first time was this true of Warwick.

"Your place is with your father, Mary. Tell me the story, as if you were speaking to your mother."

After a time the agitated girl spoke. "The dream had passed—the dream in which mother spoke. Affliction after affliction came to you, father; my heart ached day and night. You gave me no word in it all, but, instead, turned to your Bible; and Joshua, he turned to his crops.

"I was alone all day long—alone, I may say, but for *him*. Then it was that he came between us; he who, till this time, seemed concerned only in his studies. He spoke kindly. He said that you meant well, but—"

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"But what, child?"

"I forget. The words are gone. Oh, yes; he said that I had seen life's cares, had met life's sorrows, but knew nothing of life's pleasures."

"And you listened?"

"He felt sorry for me, father. He spoke very kindly. You did not object. Why should I not listen to him?"

"Go on."

"The morning I came back through the woods, after brother was shot, I met *him* before the door. But I thought nothing of that. I was too much frightened to care for aught but escape from the creatures you preach about—beasts with terrible eyes, those horrible Bible beasts.

"I did not intend to do wrong, my father; I did not see that he arranged the meetings during your absence; but it would not have mattered had you been here all the time."

"Why?"

"Your Bible came first. It covered your eyes, my father."

"And stopped his ears, too," muttered Joshua.

"I knew that you brought him to our home. You said that afternoon, 'He has been guided to

our home by the hand of the Lord.' Why should I distrust the Lord, my father?

"One day he asked me to marry him. I was frightened, for I had not thought of such a thing. I only knew that you were very busy with God, and that Joshua was very busy with crops, and that *he* thought very much of me. I was too much surprised to say no or yes. I had never thought of marrying any one.

"I was a girl and loved him. Have not other girls done as much for the men they loved? I did not tell you of our engagement, because he said it was best not to annoy you during your troubles. But one day when he came home and I met him he said that he intended to leave the Knobs the next Tuesday. He told me that Joshua and himself had that day talked the subject over, and that Joshua had agreed to take his specimens to the city. I asked him to speak to you about our engagement, and he said he would do so. But you were studying your sermons and went to the Association, and Joshua took Lionel's specimens and went to the city, and—"

Mary paused and burst into a flood of tears. "And I listened to him, and together we went to

Covington. There he left the horse and buggy and paid a man to drive it home again. Then we crossed the river and stopped at a big brown house, bigger than all the houses in Stringtown together. I asked him about the wedding, and he said it would come later; that I must have new clothes, and that I needed first to see the world. Lionel said that you would not be angry long, if at all; for, said he, 'After we are married your father will see that it was foreordained to be; and he knows that all that is, is for the best.' He used your arguments, father, and repeated some of the very texts you preached from; and I felt that they were true, because neither you nor he would say what was not true. Some time during the next day we stopped in a new city where we put up, as Lionel said, to rest."

The girl stopped abruptly, gazed upon her father and turned again to the door, but before she reached it Joshua stood before her.

"Let me go, Joshua, out into the night, or to the bluffs of far-off Knobley. Let me go, Joshua."

The youth took the startled girl in his arms; she seemed like a child in his grasp. He folded

her tenderly to his bosom and held her head upon his shoulder. After a little time her sobs subsided.

“What could I do, father? *He* said we were married by a Northern law, which required no minister; *he* said that our names were on the big book in the office as man and wife, and that we were married. I slipped down to the office and saw them both; he told the truth. What could I do—I, a strange girl in a strange city?”

Warwick, with ashen face, arose and towered to his full height. With arm extended and clenched fist, he struck out as if to crush an imaginary foe.

“Rebel or Yankee, girl, matters little in a case like this. Fathers, brothers, *men*, were in that Northern city; mothers and sisters stand ready, both North and South, to save a waif from ruin, be she of the North or the South. You had but to tell your story, child, to find a thousand Northern hearts respond. The bluest-coated Yankee in that city would have faced death in behalf of the honour of the rebel soldier’s sister, or of the rebel father’s child, had she but spoken. Why did you not turn to the first man you met? My child, my darling child, why did you let this great shame come to the house of Warwick?”

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"I was alone; alone but for him I loved and trusted, who told me what I have told you, and I believed him, because I knew not what else to do. Oh, I did wrong in leaving you, my father; but am I the first to have listened to a story that brought shame? Am I the only girl who, forlorn, alone, far from home, trusted one who should have been to her all she was to him? Am I the only girl who, knowing nothing of the world, loved unwisely? I am lost, my father—lost to you and brother and God; but am I the only sinner?"

"Would that you might be the last!"

"Pity me, father. I have not told you all. Have pity."

"Et don't make no difference now," said Joshua, "bout whether thar have been others in trouble, nor whether any others are to come to trouble. What consarns us now, es to git the endin' of this story, fer when sister gits through the time hes come fer me to begin to make another one. Go on with the story, Mary. Tell us what become of the rock-hunter. Thet's what I'm waitin' fer."

"We stopped in the hotel about a week, and all

the time he spoke of me as his wife. I wanted to write to you, my father, and ask forgiveness; but Lionel said that he would take me home after you had time to think the matter over. But one day he did not come to dinner nor to supper, nor to the room that night. I cried all night, and next morning I got a letter saying that I would never see him again. It contained some money and a railway ticket to Cincinnati, and ended by telling me to go home to my father on the Knobs."

"That was months ago, daughter. You did not come home?"

"No. I went to Cincinnati, and there looked for work. I was afraid of you; I feared the Bible on your knee, my father. I found a place in a family, where I washed dishes and did housework. The lady was kind, I say—kind, until one day she suddenly turned upon me. What could I say—I, who told her when I came that I was a lone girl, seeking a place to make an honest living? Oh, my father, the names she called me—me, who could no longer hide my shame! She would not listen to what I said—I, who needed just one friend, just one word, from a mother. 'Out of my house,' she cried; 'you disgrace my daughters



by your presence here;' and, oh, she said so many things that stunned me! 'Go where such as you belong. Go—' "

"Stop, sister! I've heard enough, ef you hain't nothin' more ter say 'bout the rock-hunter. Him's the feller I'm trackin'." Without heeding these words, the girl continued:

"Where *did* I belong—I, who had no home with human beings; where, I say, but with foxes and beasts? I turned back to Kentucky. I tramped across the great suspension bridge, out the Stringtown Pike, hiding my face from whomsoever I met, slipping through the thickets and underbrush, eating a bit of corn from the shock, or whatever I could beg of strangers. When I got to Stringtown it was in the night. I tried the door of the school-house. It was not locked. I slept on the floor beside the warm stove, and ate some lunch that I found in a basket on a desk. Then, before daybreak, I slipped away, hoping to get through Stringtown unseen; but just as I turned out the pike, by the Reform Church, a wagon overtook me. It was driven by old Mose the Jew. I tried to hide my face, but Mose knew me. He stopped, and asked me to ride.

I climbed in, and, out of sight, lay down on some sacks. He stopped at a house, and got me some breakfast, bringing it to the wagon; and when we got to the bottom of the hill before our home, he let me out, and drove on.

“But I was afraid of you, my father; and when Mose was gone I turned and ran to the woods, back to the Gunpowder Hills, back to the great cliff, where I crept in beside whatever creature came there to seek a home. One night I slept in the old abandoned Indian graveyard on the top of Mount Pisgah, over near Buffalo Hill—slept in one of the stone grave-boxes that stands there yet. But at last I could no longer stay away from you, my father, and brother; and so I came here where once I had a home.”

For the last time the girl started toward the door, only to be stopped, as before, but this time by Warwick.

“Mary, this is again your home. While your father has food or shelter you shall want for neither. Oh, my erring daughter, how you must have suffered!” He drew the child to his breast, and turned to his son.

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"Sister's home again, Joshua."

"But the story ain't ended, pap; and et won't be till I finishes et. To-morrer mornin' I starts North."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### JOSHUA BIDS FAREWELL TO THE HOME ON THE KNOB.

THE next morning father, son and daughter again breakfasted together. The son was dressed in his Sunday garments, while the daughter, pale-faced, sat in the place which had for months been vacant. No reference was made to the painful conversation of the past evening, nor to the fact that the brother was soon to start on a journey that to one reared as he had been promised to be both fruitless and reckless. What chance had he to discover the stranger who, a year ago, came to them from out the North, the great North, into which he had returned? What could the boy accomplish in case he found the man?

The daughter left the room as soon as the story was told. Evidently she realized that father and son should now be alone.

“Joshua, have you considered that the North

is large, and that you have never travelled?" said the father.

"Grandpap came to Kaintuck among the Injins, bears and wolves, pap. I'm a Warwick, too," replied the son.

"That will not help you find a man among millions of men."

"I'll find him, pap." The boy took a card out of his pocket. "The rock-hunter gave me this keard wonct, and told me to call on him and make sport. I told him that you preached 'bout a feller named Samson, who made the wrong kind of sport fer a lot of jest sech people as he 'peared to be, and that I mought not make the kind of fun he wanted. But I kept the keard, and I'll start fer the place named on et."

Warwick took the card, and read the address, then copied it in his note-book.

"Manifold are thy ways, O Lord!" was all he said.

"Pap, ef I finds the rock-hunter, et'll be me and him fer et. Ef he's the best man, I'll never come back. What'll you do then, pap?"

The father leaned his head on his hand, but made no reply.

"I hain't no brother left. Ef I don't come back, what'll you do, pap?"

"Joshua, if you do not come back, I'll go to the North. I'll wring the neck of that villain, Joshua. Say to him that as sure as God guides my footsteps aright, so sure will I find him out."

"Thet's what I wanted to hear, pap. Ef I ain't home in two months, you kin put your Bible in your pocket and your gun on your shoulder, fer you'll be the last livin' man of this family of Warwicks."

"Have you enough money, Joshua?"

"Two crops of terbacker in greenbacks." The boy held out a large pocket-book wadded with bills. "Half of et is sewed inside my vest, pap."

Warwick put his hand into an inner pocket, and drew out a heavy purse. This he handed to Joshua.

"There's gold enough to buy the help of any man in the North, Joshua. But hold, my son; in such a cause as this let us not consider money. True, the North seems to worship gold, but mammon need not be God in all things. Should you need help, tell your story to any fair man, and ask assistance. You are of a rebel family, Joshua,

tell the truth. Say that you lost two brothers in the cause you love; say that your father, too, loves the South." The minister took from a drawer a medal award of honor, and handed it to Joshua. "On this you will find engraved the name of *Warwick*. A Virginia artilleryman, my grandfather, earned it in the Revolution, when North and South were one. Tell this, Joshua, in case it becomes necessary; and in the name of justice and honor demand that help which one brother must give another, for this tie makes you kin to millions in the North."

The youth took both the medal and the purse, but did not attempt to answer his father's argument; turning to the subject that alone held his thought, he said:

"Pap, ef I finds thet rock-hunter, all I'll want es a one-cent cartridge and—" he touched his coat. "I keep a stock of 'em ready in this six-shooter. Now, let's talk 'bout sister. I ain't complainin', pap, but et 'pears to me thet ef thar's a soft side to religion, now's the time to find et. Sister's a weak girl, and hes struck mighty hard luck. I ain't blamin' her fer all the trouble thet's come, neither. She couldn't see jest what you

find in the Bible, no more then I kin see et. She dreamed 'bout ribbons and dancin' and young people—*vanity* you calls 'em, pap—and you put your foot down on all them fixin's and on our Stringtown County boys and girls, and brought her a feller from the North. Sister didn't want him, but you—and the Lord, too, accordin' ter your way of thinkin'—did. What sister wanted, you two, the Lord and you, pap, didn't. Now, I axes a favor, pap, and thet is thet you won't blame sister fer more'n her share of this trouble thet the Lord has sent to us Warwicks."

His father attempted to reply, but Joshua continued:

"I ain't through yet, pap. I axes thet you won't blame sister fer what *you* did; and I says facts when I says, ef thet rock-hunter hedn't been brought here, sister wouldn't hev run away to marry him."

Again Warwick started to interrupt the speaker.

"Keep still, pap, till I'm through. It's my last chance, maybe, fer the Lord only knows what'll come to me next. Now, et 'pears ter me thet sister hes hed trouble 'nough fer her share of the



devilment, and thet ef you ain't careful, you and God, too, maybe will be blamin' her fer your part of et. I says, pap, thet she's suffered her share, and thet the thing to do now es to show her thet you know she hes. Thet Bible of yourn is full of good things; hunt 'em up, preach 'em, pray 'em, sing 'em; make sister smile, fer she needs to smile."

"Joshua, this is blasphemy."

"I don't mean no blasphemy. I feel awful bad, and ain't thinkin' much of what I says. Pap, sister's heart es as pure as enny trustin' girl's. She trusted you and the Lord; she trusted the man you and the Lord brought to her, but the cuss deceived her. Thet ain't her fault. Now, I'm comin' to the p'int. I knows thet nex' Sunday she'll hev to go to meetin' down in the old stone church on Gunpowder Creek, and I'm afeard you will take some sech text as 'The way of the transgressor is hard.' I'm afeard of the *text*, pap."

Warwick turned in wrath upon his son.

"Joshua, no man ever before dared to say such things as you have said to me. That book is sacred, every line, every word. From that book I preach the word, as the Lord directs. To the

Lord only do I look for guidance. Say no more; if the Lord directs it, the text must be 'The way of the transgressor is hard.' "

"Pap, I know you can't help but preach what you are goin' to preach, but I knows, too, thet ef you don't open thet book to the page thet carries thet text, the Lord won't put et whar it don't belong. Thet's good sense, pap. Now, I axes es a favor thet you'll open the Bible to the page thet's got this text which I'll give as near as I kin remember." Then he repeated, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"I say ag'in thet sister's heart's pure and thet the devilment came from outside. Next Sunday you preach the text I give, and leave the workin' of the transgressor's way to me. I'll fit thet text whar et belongs, and I'll make et hard 'nough for the rock-hunter, too."

Without giving his father a chance to reply the youth left the house, and, leading his horse, soon returned from the stable. Just outside the gate he met his sister, who, awaiting him, stood by a bunch of lilac bushes. "Joshua, must you leave us? Must you go North?"

"Yes, sister," said the boy kindly.

"Possibly *he* may come back to me if you tell him how much I have suffered."

The boy shook his head.

"Give him a chance, Joshua. Tell him that I still love him dearly; tell him that I'll forgive him all if he will come back and prove that I am his wife."

Again the boy shook his head.

"Joshua, before you return you may be an uncle. Have pity, Joshua, on the innocent child. Do not shoot its father. Tell him that the girl he took from her home on the Kentucky knob awaits her husband. Tell him I look for him, my husband."

"Sister, he may get the drop on me. It's risky business and thar ain't no use in tryin' et on, fer a feller mean 'nough to do what he did es too mean to care fer anything."

"Joshua, do not kill him, for the sake of the child."

"Sister, you puts et mighty strong, and I'll give him a show; but et ain't no use ter try et on. I jest begged pap ter do a thing thet's harder fer him than this es fer me, and so I promise you I'll give the rock-hunter a chance. Ef pap preaches

the text I axed and I keep my word to you, things may come out all right yet."

Mary threw her arms around her brother's neck and impulsively kissed his tanned cheek. The boy gently released her grasp, mounted his horse and turned down the hill. When he reached the creek road at its base he raised his eyes toward the house on the knob.

That night, after the lights were out and the girl had gone to her room Warwick read his chapter and said his prayers and then stole quietly out of the door. Soon after he mounted his horse in the gloom, picked his way down the hill to the creek road and turned toward Stringtown. No light was needed by either man or beast. Every foot of the road was well known to both, for by night and by day it had been travelled time and again. Across the creek, with its rocky bottom; along the creek's bank, where the road often crept next the very edge of the bluff; through thick woodlands, where no glimpse of light appeared, passed the horseman without a break of gait. On and on, until suddenly the road seemed to stand on end, for now it turned abruptly and ascended one of the great knobs that tower above and bound

every branch of both Gunpowder and Big Bone creeks.

Up the hillside, across the highlands, through a little village nestling in a picturesque valley, on toward Stringtown, passed Warwick. Now and then he met a horseman, once a buggy, once a troop of cavalrymen, but he gave no recognition; through the night he passed along the very road his son that morning travelled; but, while the boy had gone through the village of Stringtown and moved thence down the pike toward Covington, the father went no farther than the Stringtown grocery kept by Mr. Cumback, about whose store was wont to cluster the village circle.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE STRINGTOWN GROCERY AND THE VILLAGE CIRCLE.

THE village circle in the grocery of Mr. Cumback was fairly complete that evening, a representative body of citizens, as usual, having assembled at early candle-light. The illiterate Corn-Bug, Colonel Luridson, the village clerk, little Sammy Drew, the widow's son, Judge Elford, Professor Drake, and others whom we need not name, were present. The man who attempted to tell the first story arose, and for a moment stood with downcast eyes, as if undecided how to begin.

"Sit down, Sheepshead," said Chinney Bill Smith.

"Who's a sheepshead?"

"Hold your head to the stove while I tell a story that came to mind when I cotch you trying to move your jaws. Warm your head, I say."

The man addressed as Sheepshead sat down, while the members of the circle turned to the intruding speaker.

"Men, et isn't generally known, but et's a fact, that in one county in Kaintuck the women are not allowed to eat any kind of meat but mutton."

"What'er you givin' us, Chinney?"

"Facts, gents, by the great Sam Hill, facts; but 'lessen you promise not to tell the secret, I'll not give the snap away. Et's a valuable diskivery, and ought to be patented; some men would give their farms to know et. Cross yer hearts not to tell."

"We're mum, Chinney."

"Well, here's the story as told me by Captain Sam Hill. Colonel Jargon, who died over on Blue Gum Fork 'bout ten years ago, said thet when he served in the Mexican War, fer about six months the soldiers didn't get nothin' to eat but sheep. Et war sheep fer breakfast, sheep fer dinner and sheep fer supper. When et war not lamb et war sheep, and when et war not sheep et war lamb. The men didn't think much 'bout the grub; they were glad to git sheep. The weather war hot and et war late before the frost

come, and all this time the men were eatin' mutton. One hot night the company turned into their bunks as usual, and durin' the night a norther slipped down, and next mornin' the air war full of snow. When the men turned out et war found thet every man's jaws war set tight. Not a feller could git his teeth apart. Et war a sudden attackt of a new complaint. The doctor hadn't never heard of sich a disease, and he had cotched et, too. Long 'bout nine o'clock the clouds broke and the sun come out, and then the men's mouths begun to open. Et war a curious affliction. The next night another frost come, and the next mornin' the men hed the same trouble; their jaws were shet tight ag'in. The doctor gave et up as a new disease; he wrote a scientific paper for a medical journal and gave et a long Latin name, Mexicojawshet, er somethin' like thet, an' fer writin' thet paper he got a promotion, and when the war war over he war made perfessor in one of the oldest colleges in America.

"But old Nigger Sam, the butcher, laughed at the men, and said the disease wouldn't hurt 'em; and as he war the only man free from the complaint, he war watched to see ef he war usin' any



nigger cure. Et war found that when he got out of his bunk in the mornin' he soaked his head in hot water the first thing, and when the captain called him up to explain he gives the whole snap away. Et didn't make no difference while the weather war warm, but—" Chinney Bill stopped.

"Guess what caused the disease," he asked.

"The subject's too deep for me," answered the village clerk.

"Give it up, men?" Chinney appealed to the circle.

"Yes. What was the trouble?"

"The fact war, the heads of them men hed got so full of mutton taller thet when thet cold spell struck the camp et sot into a solid cake, and thet cake of taller held their jaws shet. After thet, when the air war frosty the cook war ordered to stay up all night and boil water, so thet the next mornin' the sojers could thaw the taller in their heads without waiting fer the sun to rise. The sojers kneeled down in a line with their heads stuck out like turtles, and the cook went down the row pourin' bilin' hot water on 'em as reg'lar as the sun rose."

"What are you givin' us?" asked an old farmer.

"God's truth, es sworn to by Colonel Jargon, who died on the Blue Gum Fork 'bout ten years ago. When he come back from the war, he never give his wife no meat but mutton. The men 'bout diskivered the reason fer his dietin' his ole woman, and thet's why in thet county the women ain't none of 'em fed no kind of meat but mutton."

"Guess the taller in your head is sof'n'd now," the facetious story-teller continued, and seated himself amid clapping of hands, while the man addressed as Sheepshead (and who ever afterward was called Sheepshead) arose. But before he began, Colonel Luridson interrupted.

"Sheepshead, if you please, sah, I would like to ansah a question the judge asked just now, and will be obliged, sah, if you will grant me the honah of the floah, sah."

Down sat the man again, while Colonel Luridson continued.

"Well, sah, some people think they know what makes a fust-class hotel, but I tell you, gents, there is no use in leaving Ole Virginny or Kaintuck if you want to live high, sah. I have tested the mattah, sah, and am not talking at random. Some years ago I was travelling through the North, sah,

and fell in company with a very polite man, who was complainin' about the board down South. He had been through the South once, and in a very genteel way announced that no hotel South could be called fust-class. I took issue with him, as in honah I was bound to do, and asked him if he thought the city of Cincinnati, which we were approaching, could brag of a fust-class hotel. Yes, he said, the Spencah House could not be beat anywhah in the world for genteel refinement, or for fust-class accommodations. I took out my pocket-book, sah, and told that gent, my pile against his, the Spencah House, where we proposed to stop, was not in the fust rank, sah, and that any tavern South could give it pointers concerning accommodations due a gentleman, sah. He pushed back the money, but said that since we wah both intending to stop there, we could easily test the mattah without betting.

“ ‘All right, sah, you ordah the rooms, and if all the arrangements for a gentleman's comfort are to be found in them, the treat will be on Luridson, sah.’ I found that the Spencah House was a finely arranged tavern in some respects; there was apparently little to be desired, sah, but when that

little is the essential part of life the superfluities do not count. There wah carpets on the floah of the halls; there wah niggers in every corner of the office; there war as polite a gentleman, with as neat a shirt bosom and as fine a pin, as you ever saw, sah, behind a hotel desk. 'Take the gentlemen to their rooms,' he said, and, addressing me, 'If there is anything wanting let me know, sah.'

" 'Certainly, sah.'

"As soon as I stepped into the room I saw at a glance that no preparations for real comfort had been made. There was a richly dressed bed, sah; a fine looking-glass, a bureau fit for a wedding trip, lace curtains, thick carpet, two or three rugs, sah; hot and cold water to wash with—to *wash* with, sah. The stranger stepped into the room as I did, and stood watching me as I turned from one object to anothah, looking for the very necessities of life; and at last, as I turned back to him, he asked, 'Anything wanting?'

" 'There is, sah. It is as I told you. The room is for misses and children, and the first requisite for a gentleman's rest and comfort is wanting from this tavern, sah. When you get North of

the rivah, sah, as I told you, there is no evidence of true hospitality, sah.'

"He stood looking at me, as if lightning had shocked him.

" 'The place speaks for itself,' I said, and I pointed to the washstand. 'There is hot water, sah, but it is for the babies to wash in, sah. There is a lonesome glass, one glass, my friend,' and I pointed to the tumbler, '*one* glass. A gentleman expects company, sah, and it is the duty of a tavern-keeper to prepare to lodge gentlemen. There is no sugah on the bureau; there is no sugah on the washstand. Are we roustabouts; are our throats copper-lined, sah? When a gentleman travels all day and comes to his room with a dusty throat, a smoke-dry tongue, parched lips, and a bottle of fine old Bourbon in his valise, looking for home comforts and hospitality such as he pays for at foah dollars a day, he should have some consideration shown him. No, sah, carpets and looking-glasses are well enough in their place, but if a tavern cannot afford comforts for a gentleman of cultah it had better make less display of such things as these. What's the use of hot water, if you can't get a glass undah the spout; and where's

the comfort of life with only one tumblah, no sugah, no mint, and two gents?’

“ ‘No, sah, the Spencah House is outclassed by any Virginny or Kaintuck tavern with bare floors and wood banisters, sah. She will have to climb up higher, sah.’ ”

After Luridson had finished his story and the members of the circle expressed their appreciation, Mr. Wagner, the village clerk, abruptly asked Judge Elford:

“Judge, do you remember the answer Tommy Golding gave you when he appeared as a witness in the case of Tom Snobbins, who got into trouble for fighting in the barroom of the Williams House?”

Judge Elford smiled. Notwithstanding his dignity when on the bench, and his reserve and stateliness when duty called, Judge Elford when among his neighbors was as genial and cordial as any member of the circle, and even enjoyed a joke that was occasionally told at his own expense.

“Can I give it, judge?”

“Stand up,” cried the chorus; “stand up.”

The judge nodded and the lank clerk uprose.

“Some years ago the bar of the Williams House

was in one corner of the building; but the house sat too far back from the pike for convenience, and when Dutch Joe opened his saloon across the road business suffered. In order to meet this competition, a separate room was built near the pike. Tom Snobbins and Lon Cumfrey fell against each other in the barroom one day and got ugly, each swearing the other was drunk. They didn't get to blows, but one word followed another, and finally a feud arose; they got into law and the case came up before Judge Elford." The speaker winked at the judge.

"Tommy Golding, the Irish hostler, who also assisted as barkeeper of the Williams House, was the sole witness of the quarrel, and in giving his evidence the lawyer asked a formal question concerning the exact location of the barroom, and whether it was in the tavern proper or detached. The judge didn't catch Tommy's reply and directed him to repeat his words.

" 'An' phwat quistion air ye axin', jidge? "

" 'Where is the barroom of the Williams House located? Is it a part of the tavern, or is it in a separate building? "

" 'An' phwat air ye givin' me, jidge? As

moiny toimes es oi have seen you standin' up to thet bar a-takin' of a dhrink, an' now you do be axin' sich quistions av the loikes av me.' "

Great applause followed this satire.

"It's your turn now, judge," cried a spectator.

"Yes," chimed in the circle, "you're in for it, judge."

"I beg to be excused, gentlemen. I have already, it seems, contributed my share to the evening's entertainment. Let us hear from Professor Drake, who seems to have a severe attack of the blues this evening."

"A penny for your thoughts, professor," said a bystander.

"I am thinking of a child. What leads my mind from these scenes and your trivial stories to him? They have nothing in common. I am thinking of a dirty face, a *dirty* face," he repeated, and lapsed into silence.

"Tell us about the dirty face."

"You are acquainted with the little house just above the mouth of the Mt. Carmel Pike, the house in which old black Ephraim lived, and which, since his disappearance, has been deserted; windowless it has stood these many days."



Professor Drake rested his voice a second and then continued. "It is empty again." Following this short sentence came another interlude, when, as though by an effort, he added, "A *very* dirty face."

What could be troubling our village teacher? Never before had we heard him speak in so desultory a manner. Then he proceeded:

"Shortly after the beginning of the last school session a gentle tap came on the schoolroom door. I opened it and ushered in a boy about ten years of age, leading a younger boy by the hand. They stopped and looked about in a frightened manner and seemed inclined to retreat, when I said, in a pleasant tone, 'Don't be afraid, children. Do you wish to attend school?'

" 'We do, do we, Jim and me,' spoke the older one in a drawling monotone. He held out his hand, and in its palm rested a bright silver quarter.

" 'Mam sed fer us to come ter schule 'til the wuth ov this war taken out in larnin'.'

"Dirty and ragged were these boys, dirtier and more ragged than ever children before were seen in the Stringtown school. I returned the money

and seated them on the end of a bench, away from the other children, with whom it was questionable whether they should come into personal contact. That night they were detained after school and I got their history. They came from Grassy Creek, and with a sot of a father (as I learned afterward) and a mother little, if any, better than he, lived now in the house deserted by black Ephraim.

“‘Be sure and wash your faces before coming to school to-morrow morning,’ I said as they were dismissed. Next morning they came with clean faces, but in a few days were as dirty as before. This time I spoke more positively.

“‘You *must* wash your hands and faces before starting to school.’ Again the faces were clean, but within a week they were as dirty as when first I saw them. Gentlemen, I pleaded with, scolded, threatened those children. I exhausted every power of persuasion and vainly exerted every possible influence. Had they seemed at all provoked, or had they resented my attempts to reform their slovenly habits, I should have been delighted; but their disposition was amiable and their deportment exceptionally good.

“‘Yes, sir,’ they would answer when I gave

my customary order concerning clean faces. 'We'll be clean ter-morrer,' and for that once they would be clean, but not clean again until I gave the next positive order.

"Friends," and the professor now spoke to us directly, "men should weigh carefully their words. Who can tell when a hasty word will turn to plague one's self? 'Jimmy,' I said one day to the younger boy, 'you provoke me beyond endurance. Do you intend to go through life with a dirty face? Do you intend to be a dirty-faced man?'

"The child had been languid all that day. I can see now what I did not observe then, languid, spiritless, dirty. He looked up at me quickly; his black eyes peer at me yet. Ignoring my reference to the dirty-faced man, he asked:

" 'Kin a dirty boy git inter heaven, teachah?'

" 'No, only clean children can go to heaven.'

" 'I wants ter go ter Heaven, fer I'm tired ov livin'. Mam, she's in her cups ag'in and pap's in jail. Guess these clean children in schule hain't got my mam and pap, else they wouldn't always be clean.' He looked at his little brown fingers.

" 'We hain't no soap in the house, teachah, an'

we hain't no stove ter heat water on. We fry's our bacon and hominy in a skillet, when we have any bacon, and bakes our corn pone in the ashes. Guess ef some ov these other children hadn't no soap and no hot water and had a drunk mother their faces wouldn't be so clean frosty mornin's. I breaks the ice in a pan when I washes. It's awful cold, teachah, and the dirt sticks mighty bad.

“ ‘Does God keep children out of heaven fer havin' dirty faces, ef—’ the child hesitated, did not complete the sentence, but abruptly added, ‘I'll have a clean face, teachah, when you see me ag'in. I'm awful tired now, and I didn't have no breakfast.’

“The two children turned to go, and go they did, without a word from me. My heart was in my throat, remorse was in my soul. ‘I will apologize to-morrow in some way,’ I said to myself; but no dirty children came on the morrow, nor yet the next day, nor the next. Never again did those little ones, dirty nor clean, come to school, hand in hand, as was their wont, never.” A tear glistened in the teacher's eye.

“One morning a gentle knock sounded on the schoolroom door, just such a knock as ushered in

the children that first day, and, strangely enough, I thought of Jimmy and his brother before opening the door. In stepped the brother alone. He stood before me with clean face, but his countenance was peaked and thin, very thin. 'Teachah,' he said, 'Jimmy wants yer ter come an' see him.'

" 'Why did he not come with you, Johnny?'

" 'He can't come. He's dead.'

" 'Could any blow have crushed more directly on my heart? I stood stupefied. 'Tell me about it, child.'

" 'Jim took the fever the nex' day after you told him 'bout heaven. He died this mornin'. But he knowed he war goin' ter die, and he said ter me, "Brothah, I wants ter go ter heaven, whar thar ain't no dirt, ner fights, ner whiskey. Take the quartah the teachah give us back, an' buy soap with it and' scrub the shanty floah an' my duds, and wash me clean, fer I may die sudden.'" And I did, teachah, and the good doctor brought Jim some fruit and some goodies, but 'twan't no use.

" 'He war awful hungry all his life, but when the goodies come et war too late, and he couldn't eat. He jest laid still and fingered the orange, and

then handed et to me. "Eat et, Johnny, and let me see yer eat et." I did, teachah. Thar warn't no one in the room but Jim'n me, and he laid still and smiled es pleasant like es ef he had eaten et himself. This mornin' Jim sed, sed he, "Brothah, wash me clean an' put the sheet on the bed." We hain't but one sheet, teachah. And then he said, "I wants a clean face, fer I'm goin' ter try and git inter heaven, brothah, and when I'm dead, tuck the clean sheet close 'bout me and comb my hair, and then go fer the teachah. Tell him ter come and see how clean I am in the new clean sheet, and ax him if he thinks I'll git inter heaven." "

"The child stopped. I could not speak. He mistook my emotion for a denial of his request.

" 'Please, teachah. You told Jimmy how ter git ter heaven, and he war *clean* when he died. Won't you come and see him?' "

Professor Drake covered his face with his hands. More than one rough face about that Stringtown grocery was tear-streaked.

"Is that all?" asked Judge Elford.

"That is all," replied Professor Drake. "As I have said, the cabin is empty again. The disso-

lute mother and Jimmy's brother have gone back to Grassy Creek."

The depressing effect of this story came with unexpected force over our members. A period of silence fell upon the circle; just such an awkward silence as occasionally happens when mirth is at its highest. For a moment no person spoke. Then the grocer, Mr. Cumback, said: "Joshua Warwick rode through town this morning."

At these words it could be seen that the faces of the members became even more earnest.

"Which way, Cumback?"

"North."

Another period of silence. Then, as though the speaker was toying with a forbidden subject, a member spoke in an undertone: "It's an awful trouble thet's come to Preacher Warwick."

"Yes," replied Mr. Cumback. "No other man in this county, 'lessen et's the jedge (glancing at Elford), could hev stood et. It's an awful trouble, men, and I felt et mightily when Joshua come through town to-day. He looked down at his horse's ears and hedn't no use fer no one ner nobody."

"Didn't he stop, Cumback?"

"Yes, he hitched his horse and come in. 'Where's Mose?' he asked. I told him Mose was out in the country.

" 'Has he talked 'bout us Warwicks?'

" 'Not a word that I've heard.'

"The young feller stood a moment, then said, 'Tell Mose thet I says not to talk.' Then he bought a box of cartridges and rode off."

"Back home?"

"No, North."

"Warwick has seen a lot of trouble in the last year," said Judge Elford, "but through it all he stands as a rock, uncomplaining, firm in the faith of his fathers. A remarkable man, this Warwick. He would have made a typical Calvinist or Puritan, a glorious, psalm-singing soldier of Cromwell, or a devoted Mohammedan. Indeed, his religious doctrine embodies the fatalism which, to a greater or less degree, is a part of such as these. Poor fellow! how patiently he meets trouble, such as might drive other men to distraction, or to frenzy! First, arrested and forced to take the iron-clad oath, which fact galls him more than we know. Then one of his boys is discovered shot to death down among the Gunpowder hills,



and next the other one is murdered while a prisoner of war. And then—" The judge stopped.

A glance of the eye sped from man to man, at which one less discreet than Judge Elford finished the sentence.

"And then his only daughter ran off with a Northerner whom her father had befriended."

"A sweet girl, too," replied Judge Elford. "I have often visited Warwick and lingered longer than I should, for her face was of that touching beauty which gladdens the eye and brings joy to the heart. I am not in my youth, but yet—"

Abruptly a new sentence replaced the half-finished one.

"Mary Warwick has the sweet face of her mother, the noble eye of her father, the winning smile and artless glance, that since, that since—" again the judge stopped.

"Since what, judge?"

"It's a long time back," continued the judge in reverie. "A long time since Mary's mother and I first met. It was just after I came to Stringtown. I was young; she was younger. Fate was against us. I was a poor lawyer, and loved in silence, loved and starved, hoping some day to

dare speak the word, but in vain. And now I, who have passed through trials enough to squeeze the dross from out one's heart, sorrows enough to leave only the sacred embers from the fires that once stirred my soul, think of Mary Warwick as of one close to her angel mother, who seemed to look back at me when I gazed into Mary's eyes. Men," the judge spoke tenderly, earnestly, holding the sympathetic confidence of all the circle, "men, Mary Warwick has given her love to one whom I do not know; but when I heard that she had turned her face from the old home and had followed her lover to the North—I who make no pretension of religion, but have never forgotten the teachings of my mother, and occasionally repeat yet the simple prayers she taught me when a child—that night kneeled down by my bed and prayed as never had I done since my own lost boy left home for the North. Prayed that back to Mary Warwick might come the love she gave the man who led her out of Kentucky, as earnest love as in silence I gave her mother in the days of old; prayed that to old man Warwick might not come a touch of the sorrow that came back to me from the North by reason of my erring Charley boy."

The head of the judge dropped ; his long, white beard was crushed against his breast. Just then the door of the grocery opened, and into the room stepped—Warwick, Preacher Warwick of the Knobs. His eye glanced from face to face ; so abrupt had been the unexpected entrance of the person under discussion as to startle one and all, if we may except the experienced judge. Rising, he grasped the great hand of Warwick.

“Welcome to Stringtown, Simeon,” was the greeting, “welcome to Stringtown.”

One after another the incomer shook each man by the hand, thoughtlessly squeezing each until the person squirmed, for the closing of the palm of Warwick was like the shutting of a vise. Without taking the proffered seat, he now slipped his arm into that of Judge Elford.

“I would see you alone, judge. May we not go to your home?”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### WARWICK'S INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE ELFORD.

LEAVING the grocery, Warwick unhitched his horse, slipped the bridle over his arm, and walking side by side in the pike, the two men passed to the modest house of Judge Elford. After hitching the horse to a ring in a post on the outer line of the sidewalk, the judge and his guest entered the room, where the judge turned up the light of a kerosene lamp that burned low on the table.

"Be seated, Simeon," he said, and he opened a cupboard and took out a rosewood chest which held a number of bottles of unique design. Selecting one of the bottles, the judge held it between himself and the light.

"This liquor flowed from the still in 1840. The cask from which this bottle was drawn was lost in a steamboat wreck, and for twelve years the bar-

rel lay beneath the surface of an Ohio River sand-bar. On its discovery less than half its contents remained, but such bourbon as this is now cannot be bought for money. I have been reserving the bottle for an appreciative guest, a guest of honor."

From a compartment in the chest he took two glasses; then from another recess a bowl of sugar and a pair of silver sugar tongs. The parson shook his head and declined the sugar, but filled his glass to the brim from the proffered bottle. The judge did the same, and then, after touching the rims together, they drank. Smacking his lips, the minister said: "A royal drink, judge. The touch is as nectar to the tongue."

The two friends now seated themselves, the judge knowing well that an errand which drew Simeon Warwick to Stringtown at that time of night, and led him to seek an interview in the manner he had done, must be of exceptional importance.

"In what may I serve you, Simeon?" he asked.

"I want counsel and advice."

"Whatever I can offer is at your service, Simeon."

"The subject is to be in confidence, judge."

"Certainly. Speak freely."

"I am in trouble."

"You are not alone, Simeon."

"I *am* alone, judge. Trouble such as I must bear came never before to any of my name."

"Warwick," and Judge Elford reached over and toyed with an empty glass, "Warwick, others in Stringtown County have taken the oath."

"I am not thinking of the oath."

"Others have lost a son."

"Nor yet do I speak of my boy."

"You have lost two sons, Simeon, but such is the fortune of war. Be philosophic, Warwick."

"I have one son left, judge. Had this son also been lost in behalf of the Confederacy, yet would I not complain. It is not of these things I speak."

The judge made no reply. The name of Warwick's daughter, she who was supposed to have eloped and married, came to his lips, but he remained silent, toying with the glass. Then, rising, he filled the glasses once more.

"Is it of Mary you speak?"

"Yes."

"Be of good cheer, Warwick. She will yet

yearn for her Southern home, for another glimpse of her father, for her brother, for her childhood's haunts, amid your knobs and creeks. Be of good heart, Simeon, and when she writes from her Northern home, begging forgiveness, asking for both herself and her husband a share of your love, a part of your heart's welcome, forgive and forget. Bid her come back and bring him to whom her young love was given. Be merciful, I say, Warwick, for her mother's sake, if not for your own. Be charitable, Warwick, for the sake of her dear little ones, who in a day to come will be to you all that bright young faces are to such as you and me, Simeon."

After the manner of old, Warwick rose and paced the room. Every step shook the floor. The lamplight played strange freaks as it danced in rings on the ceiling; the empty glasses on the table jingled like bells. Warwick seated himself, and turning to his host, spoke in the deep bass tone so familiar to those who knew him when he was possessed by intense excitement.

"Mary will never bring her husband from the North. Would to God she might do so."

"What do you mean?"

"She is neither—" The giant covered his face with his hands.

"What, Warwick?"

"Let it pass, judge. I cannot say the word."

"You do not mean it, Simeon."

"I do."

The judge sprang to his feet and paced up and down, his hands clasped behind him, his eyes fast fixed upon the floor.

"Simeon Warwick, do you tell me that this man whom you befriended, who came to your home a stranger and was given a place at your table, has done this great wrong to you and her—yes, to all of us?"

"I do."

"Simeon, tell me all you know. Tell me how this thing began; tell me how it was that you, to whom that innocent child was left as a sacred charge by her dying mother, came to let a stranger commit this great crime. You come to me for counsel and advice, Warwick. Do you want me to give it?"

"I do. It was for that I came to-night."

"Shall I speak freely, as man to man?"

"Yes."



"Are you strong enough to hear the truth, the whole truth?"

"The truth is what I want; the truth and counsel."

"Then I must know what you have done, or did not do that should have been done, as well as what others did, before I can do my duty."

The preacher's face flushed. "You turn your tongue two ways."

"Warwick," said the judge, "when you took that girl's mother to be your wife, well do I mark the day, you charged yourself before the God you serve to care for her and hers. Is not this true?"

"Yes. Have I not lived the promise out?"

"Tell me, Warwick, how it was that such a man as this, beneath your eye, was permitted to do such a crime as this."

"I knew nothing of it, judge. I had no suspicion of the fact that Mary loved him. As a viper's back is broken would I have snapped his spine had suspicion entered my mind."

"Tell me how it happened."

Warwick, confident of the justice of his own part, and seemingly acquiescing in the right of the judge whose advice he had sought, told in detail the story.

"Warwick," spoke Elford, "this judgment is such as you, who drew it upon yourself, might have expected. Yes, a judgment upon you who think that the fire of a young life can be quenched by a coat of ice-cold theology, which carries in itself nothing to touch a throbbing heart, nothing to appeal to human love or human life, nor yet anything that concerns men and women in whose veins runs the red blood of youth. Sit still, I say, and listen."

"I'll not take this, sir, even from you, Judge Elford."

"You must, Warwick. It is too late to retreat; you must take the whole truth. This dogma which, in the name of religion, you have practised has wrecked that child. You have sacrificed your own life, your home, your daughter."

"Judge Elford, I cannot permit this reflection on my God and my trust. To me religion is sacred."

"And so religions are to me, Simeon; more so, I believe, than to you."

Warwick turned livid.

"This from you, Judge Elford, you who make no profession; this to me, whose life has been devoted to labor in the Master's vineyard?"

"Yes, Warwick, this to you, who have no charity for any theological doctrine other than that based upon the dogma you follow; to you who preach that all men outside your narrow circle are doomed by God to eternal torment. You came to me for counsel. I have listened to your story. Let me weigh the evidence."

"You attack my religion, sir; you even charge me with being less religious than yourself, whom the Lord never elected to a confession."

"I said, Simeon, that *religions* to me are more sacred than to you; religions, Simeon, not one inflexible theological doctrine. And in this sense I tolerate your own conception; your earnest faith in a cruel God is a marvel. It well earns the pitying admiration of men outside the Old School of Baptists. But let that pass. We are speaking of your daughter."

"It shall not pass, Judge Elford. You are no child. Your tongue does not speak at random. I must know what lies behind these words, sir."

The judge turned to the rosewood chest and took from it two glasses, larger than the first, but smaller than the tumblers. These he filled from the decanter. "A sip, Warwick, for our nerves.

I, who am to speak, need the sip to warm my blood and to give me strength to say what I should say; you, who must hear what never before came to your ear, the plain, unvarnished truth, need the touch of bourbon to soothe your passion, cool your brain and quiet your nerves."

But this time the participants did not tip their glasses, and when replaced on the table they stood far apart; the rims did not touch as each time they had before.

"Simeon Warwick, you came out of the Knob Lands to me, an old friend, for counsel, for advice. You came to me because you know I am incapable of doing a wrong to man or men. You know that all that leads men to wickedness lies now outside my life; behind me, Warwick, are the things which attract men to wrong in worldly matters. This you must concede, Warwick."

"Yes."

"You know, too, that my life has been spent in a field that bids me weigh well my words, that bids me hold charity for the errors of mankind."

"Yes."

"I have said these things to show that in what I have next to say no trace of selfishness exists.

I came near saying no antagonism begotten of creed; no dislike of man because of some difference in church ceremony by which one sect differs superficially from some other sect. But let that pass, for these things have with me no weight; they are human differences, not divine, and when on their account passion rises they point to human weakness. Let it pass. I must speak both of your daughter and you, too, Warwick, and while I am speaking shall brook no interruption. When I am through you will have both my counsel and advice."

"This is what brought me here to-night; but I do not like your temper, Judge Elford."

"Warwick, from the day you stood beside the girl, who left you as a legacy a sacred charge, the care of that wronged child, your daughter Mary, from the day when you promised before Almighty God to watch over and cherish her who then gave you that love, you have steeled your heart to do inhuman things, and these things, alas! you charge to the God who made you. By a course of reasoning little short of what I call damnable you take the Book of Books, and by abstracting isolated sentences that may or may not have been

corrupted since the pen dropped from their author's hand you evolve, practise and preach a salvation scheme which makes a demon of the Creator. You do even worse than this. You teach that the millions of helpless human beings who cannot accept your theology, this God you uplift casts into everlasting hell, a place of torment created, as you believe, for the eternal misery of most of the human race. No voice or act of friend or self can save such helpless unfortunates, while you and a few others like you, by virtue of no self act, were elected in the beginning of time to an eternity of pleasure, a heaven of delight. But this that I have said would in itself be of small concern, for belief in a dogma does not make it fact, did you confine your cruel methods to yourself."

Suddenly Warwick interjected: "'Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.'"

"Listen, Warwick. Not content with upbuilding such a conception of an all-wise and just God, you turn His wrath upon your own flesh and blood. You even sing praises to the monstrous conception that has, you believe, saved your own

soul and damned your children. Instead of a loving father, you become a dogmatic tyrant in your own home, and while the sacred name of God is yet on your lips you pervert nature by crushing your young daughter's spirit. You attempt to turn her youth into old age; you damn her soul, and next you desert her by a course of neglect which lets the abandoned child drift to ruin. Simeon Warwick, this is the truth as I see it, and if it be the truth, the responsibility for this great wrong that has come to the name of Warwick lies at your own door. You, who gave that dear child no father's love, no human affection, no touch of what a young life craves, you are the one who must, before thoughtful men, stand responsible for the disgrace that at last has wrecked your home and placed a crown of thorns upon your daughter's brow.

"Sit still, I say, Warwick. But for this fanatical creed that you call religion your daughter might now be a ray of sunshine in your home. Had you made your God lovable, your theology enjoyable, your daughter's happiness a part of your thought; had you permitted her to frolic and laugh and sing with young people, to dance, to

wear a bright dress or a gay ribbon; had you joined in her little pleasures and taken part in her girlish sorrows, this night, Simeon Warwick, you need not have been in Stringtown with disgrace on your name and ruin in your home. The dream of singing girls and dancing young folks that came to the maiden one year ago was as natural to her as breath; it was a craving born of the impulse God gave her. Had you listened to that voice the arm of some young man in Stringtown County would have protected her honor; his love would have saved her from what your Bible and your conception of a relentless God failed to do. You, Simeon, you who claim to be of the Lord's elect, and yet do other things than I have named, which others with no less right to act as judge consider little short of the devil's work, I consider responsible for this distressing sorrow."

The judge ceased, and Warwick, stunned by the sudden outburst, the unexpected flow of criticism, in which both his Lord and himself were so ruthlessly assailed, sat for a time in silence.

"Judge Elford," he said at length, "the dream of my daughter Mary, the vision, if you will, has



more than come true. My cup of tribulation is full to the brim. Never did I expect to hear such words as these—never. And yet to you I shall answer nothing back. ‘Our God is a consuming fire,’ and I, who could do vengeance in my own name as easily as crush that frail glass, shall throw myself upon the mercy of the brethren of the church and await the Lord’s judgment on you. In the words of Elder Gilbert Beebe, I would say: ‘It is not our province to display the divine attributes of the Deity to the understanding of those who have never been made experimentally acquainted with them through the quickening operation of the Holy Ghost.’

“This fearful charge against religion, sir, in your lost condition—for you are, I believe, lost to God—is as the mind wanderings of one irresponsible. They carry nothing more than the errors of one frail man, who presumes to speak of what he cannot comprehend. But one thing I must ask. What do I that others, who claim to be less religious, consider the devil’s work? I must know this.”

Pointing to the empty glasses, the judge replied. “Men there are who believe even the pur-

est, the most inspiring, alcoholic liquor to be an emissary of the devil."

"Fanatics, sir. No harm is there in the temperate use of this good friend to man. Unless it be abused, as friendship may be, or misused, as God's gifts sometimes are, there is no harm in liquor. In the very words of one of my distinguished brethren, 'When men set themselves up to be wise above what is written, and take upon themselves to call that a curse which God has called a blessing, and that a sin which the Scriptures sanction, and to implicate the Lord Jesus Christ for nonconformity to their rules, we enter our unreserved protest. The Temperance Society, as it is now commonly called, has become so drunk with the wine of the mother of abominations as to attempt to effect a change in the most sacred ordinance of the Church of God!' Judge Elford, the term temperance has been corrupted by these sons of Babel into Prohibition, which word means intolerance, dogmatic persecution, sir, and this you know as well as I do.

"And now, good-night. As for me, 'I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me,' saith the Word. I came for counsel to a friend I loved. I

go in sorrow to seek counsel where I should first have turned."

"Be patient, Warwick. I am not through. That which I have said concerns you. Let me now speak of Mary. Warwick, to-morrow morning I shall start for the North, and if I can discover this young man, shall plead for justice toward you and yours. Have faith in me, Simeon."

"It is too late."

"And why too late?"

"Before you can reach the man, Joshua, my son, will have found him."

The judge turned suddenly upon Warwick.

"Do you mean to say that Joshua has already gone North on this errand?"

"Yes."

"I was told to-night that this morning he passed through Stringtown, and purchased some cartridges of grocer Cumback. He has murder in his heart, Simeon."

"He seeks for justice as he understands it. No drop of cowardly blood runs in the veins of any Warwick."

"I call it murder, Warwick. Justice such as

this boy seeks comes in death, Simeon. Joshua seeks for vengeance, not justice. He needs but find this man to take the law into his own hands. There is now no chance for Mary."

For a time the two men sat again in silence. Then Judge Elford said: "Yes, Warwick, I fear it is indeed too late, if Joshua knows where to find the man he seeks."

"He has the young man's address, judge." The speaker took out his note-book. "This address."

The jurist made a note of the address, then with trembling hand filled again the glasses and handed one to Warwick, who raised it between his thumb and finger tips, holding the amber liquid between himself and the lamp. Thus, soliloquizing, he muttered: "Such a beverage as this, which God has given to warm the blood and strengthen the nerves, needs be touched tenderly, lovingly; a gift it is from God." The edges of the glasses tingled again, and next the empty glasses rested upon the table beside the empty bottle. Then in a low tone the judge spoke:

"Warwick, you, a follower of the great ethical teacher of mankind, of Him who spoke the words, 'Peace on earth, good will to men,' did a mighty

wrong when you did not prevent Joshua from starting on this errand. Too late you seek my counsel; one child is ruined and deserted, and the other, bent on murder, is out of reach. What a travesty both on the teachings of the gentle Nazarene and on justice! This must be my final advice, Simeon, to you who came to ask it: Go home and brush from your heart all touch of human pride. Humble yourself before your daughter; fold her in your arms, as you should have done these years ago; beg her forgiveness, for she has much to forgive in the wrong you have done her by indifference and neglect. Is it not written that 'a bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench'? Warwick, take your Bible and read the sweet words it extends to erring humanity; seek the passages which tell of God's love; mark well the passages which offer consolation to the aching heart, to the soul racked in anguish. Think less upon 'the consuming fire.' I am not ordained by man to preach God's word, but yet, Mr. Warwick, I have a common right to teach from out of that Word the great lessons of human love found in this Book, which is my companion as well as yours. Have you never read

the beautiful story of Jesus and the fallen woman, as recorded in the eighth chapter of John?" The judge stepped around the table; he stood close before the minister and looked him intently in the eye.

"Mr. Warwick, the cause I plead is not that of Mary only. It is that of every sacrificed girl and woman. I plead for every girl who sins, and next feels the harsh touch of the world; who even finds the hearts of men and women in the church to be, alas! as cold as stone. Warwick, you and such as you who claim to voice Him to whom you raise your eyes in supplication in your own behalf, if you be consistent, must as I, a jurist, interpret the Word, cease casting stones at poor, unfortunate womankind. Did He not say, 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more'?"

The minister rose and turned to the door, but made no reply.

"Have pity on your unhappy daughter, Warwick. Help bear her sorrow and let her help bear yours. Speak gently, Simeon." He held his hand a moment, and then added:

"Simeon, forgive me if I have been passionate to-night. Possibly, too, the drink fired my brain

a trifle. Forgive me, Warwick, if my words have made your heart ache, which must needs be but a trifling matter, however, in consideration of the heart-aches that have come to old and young under the merciless sermons you have hurled at one and all. When you told me of that dark blot on your home I saw not your own sufferings, but a vision of the noble woman who stood beside you in the years that have passed, and whom you promised to watch over and protect. I saw next her child dishonored, an outcast. Warwick, your daughter is yet that mother's child. Mary is a gift from God, and needs to be watched over tenderly, lovingly."

The door closed, and Warwick unhitched and mounted his horse, turning back toward the way he came. As he passed the junction of the pike, where nestled the Church of the Disciples, a horseman came from beneath the shadows of the beech-clad road. To any but an expert woodsman the man would have been unrecognized, but to Warwick both the indistinct figure of the man and the clatter of his horse's feet were familiar. Halting, the minister awaited the traveller, who reined his horse when neck came to neck. Leaning over,

speaking in a monotone, as if afraid the silent church might catch the words, Warwick said :

“John, Dr. John, before many days have passed old black Jupiter will ride from the Knob to call you to my home. Make no delay, John; whether it be night or day, come quickly.” He touched his horse with his whip, and as Dr. John turned toward Stringtown Warwick passed into the shadows of the beechwood.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### WARWICK'S SERMON IN HIS HOUR OF DARKEST TRIAL.

WHEN the morning of the Sabbath came Preacher Warwick rode alone toward the church on the island. There was no need for Joshua, on account of his sister, to have implored his father to preach a sermon telling of the kindness and love of God.

The minister passed alone down the drive that morning from the home on the Knob; traversed the creek road, scarcely raising his eyes from his horse's ears. News travels swiftly in the country; spoken word seems scarcely necessary from man to man to tell of passing events. Excepting the interview between the judge and the minister, all that is known to one who has followed this written record, was familiar to every person who sat before the preacher that Sabbath morning,

and this fact Warwick appreciated as if it had been proclaimed aloud.

He sat behind the pulpit, cold, stern, and invincible, typical of one who accepted without a murmur the decrees of his ever just God. Never a tremor came to his voice as he began that memorable sermon, evidently designed to refute the arguments of Judge Elford, whose scathing words had cut him to the quick. Not a sign of mental emotion did he exhibit, not a change of facial muscle, nor yet a quiver of the eyelash or a falter in the tongue. His text for the first section was taken from Romans viii. 28, 29, 30:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among his brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.”

For forty minutes a flow of words in support of the doctrine of predestination came as water from a fountain, and with refreshing gladness fell upon the ears of the devoted and trusting congregation. From a low tone his voice rose higher and higher, and in the argumentative discourse his ready tongue quoted verse after verse of

Scripture, each supporting a phase of theological doctrine so dear to his people, each designed to meet the arguments of the scoffer at the Word, as Warwick interpreted it. But at last the flow of eloquence subsided, and Warwick, with left hand on the rude pulpit, leaned over; with face uplifted and right arm extended he whispered, but so distinctly that each touch of sound went to the farthest corner of the sanctuary:

“If these things are not true, my brethren, this Book is a book of lies. This sacred work, more precious than all else man holds dear, speaks in language a child can comprehend, and it is written therein, ‘Before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee’; and, ‘As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed,’ and, my brethren, does not the Book of Books offer further consolation in that we are saved, ‘Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace’? My brethren, so sure as the great Lord lives, if the Bible be true, foreordination is a God-given fact; if foreordination be not the word of God, this sacred volume is false. The man who cuts these texts and these verses out of this Book licenses other men to cut other verses and other

texts, and thus the Word is lost. The devil asks no greater friend than him who 'adds to or takes from' these pages."

Then, turning the leaves of the Book, Warwick pronounced aloud the word "Secondly," and read from Revelations xx. 15 the text: "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire." For half an hour he held attention with this important feature of his doctrine. As before text after text was quoted to prove the doctrine of eternal punishment, of a real fire of brimstone, which is the allotted part of those the Lord had predestined to be damned. A terrible picture that, one which made the flesh quiver and the heart sink, but it demonstrated how, had the speaker cared to do so, he could have silenced Judge Elford. If sinful man was ever held up to the wrath of God, Warwick's "Secondly" that day did the deed to perfection. If ever an inspired speaker drew a picture of lost man tormented in hell by an All-wise God, this picture was shown that day to the little congregation on the island. Never before had Warwick illustrated so vividly that terrible hell; never before had he portrayed so realistic a view of man

condemned by God and suffering the torments of eternal damnation. And when at last his voice sank to a low tone and ended with, "Dear brethren, be patient under all your tribulations; 'Resignation sweeteneth the cup, but impatience dasheth it with vinegar,' " those before him felt that the sermon came from the very depths of his soul, and that such a hell as Warwick described was not too heroic a punishment for a father to inflict upon the man who brought that hour of shame to innocent Mary Warwick; for that man's name, in connection with the sermon, was in the minds of many. And then at last came "Thirdly," the text being from that bulwark of strength to his people, the eighth chapter of Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

If the word eloquent portrayed the sermon to this point, there is no term by which to lead to the comprehension of that which followed. The mind of the man threw itself, with all its sorrow-bred force, into the picture he drew of the person racked by all the text carried, and who yet stood steadfast in his faith in God. Quotation after

quotation from the Scriptures dropped from his tongue, each fitting into a place that no other could occupy. The sermon was typical of the unswerving course of the eventful life of this man, to whom in all his trials God stood first and ever supreme. But at last his voice again sank low and ended with the words of the Apostle James :

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.”

Then came the final hymn and the closing prayer, after which, in accordance with the precepts of his people, the “elect” remained to partake of the communion service, while others departed. After the sacred offering was over Warwick spoke :

“I would ask of you, my brethren, the indulgence of a moment’s time. Your pastor wishes to unburden his mind of a weight that presses overmuch, a weight he can no longer bear alone.” And then continued : “To you, to whom I should have gone when tribulation and distress came to my soul, I now turn. I have sinned, but the Lord who guided my fathers, and to whom I look for

strength, will enable me to meet the great affliction that has brought shame to my name and distress to my old age; affliction such, my brethren, as the Lord spared Job. Yet do I not complain of this, my lot, nor yet at the sorrow that preceded; nor do I murmur at the future, which may bereave me of my only boy, who somewhere in the North seeks now to avenge his sister's wrong." The speaker ceased and awaited the answer. It came from a white-haired man, who rose before opening his remarks:

"Brother Warwick, these things you speak need not be mentioned, for we, your brethren, know full well that you will meet as becomes a faithful servant whatever trial the all-wise and merciful Lord sends to you; but now that you have given us the chance to say it, I can tell you that not only the brethren of this church but men and women of this community, one and all, grieve with you, whose sorrow is also our own. It matters not whether we are for the North or for the South, the death of your two sons brought grief to us all, and the distress that comes now into your household touches us to the quick. Brother, our hearts go out in sympathy to you and yours. Let,

then, the part concerning which we, too, know overmuch, rest. Tell us of Joshua."

"The boy seeks the man who wronged his sister. If the Lord guides him aright, and his arm be strong, he will undo the wrong as far as human retribution can undo it. If not, I shall go to the North."

"Brother"—and now the white-haired man spoke very slowly and distinctly—"brother, is this according to the Word?" He pointed to the Bible.

"It is."

"Is it not written, 'Thou shalt not kill'?"

"Yes; and in Ecclesiastes it is also written that there is 'a time to kill.' But it is not of this I would speak. That which is to be, will be. It is of a dark sin that weighs down upon my soul."

"Let that come next," replied the white-haired speaker. "What we say now concerns us now. Brother, there comes a time in the affairs of men when one who wishes to do a deed must forego the act—"

Abruptly Warwick interjected: "I shall not forego the act. If the Lord wills that Joshua die,



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I pray the Lord to will me strength to follow him North."

"It must not be, brother."

Tears sprang to the eyes of the pastor of that island church, the first tears that had come since his afflictions began.

"It is a Warwick's duty, William, a Warwick's privilege, for I shall then be the only Warwick of the Knob. In case I do not return, have pity on my daughter Mary. Take her to your hearts; care for her tenderly; be to the unfortunate girl all that father and mother should be."

At this point a young man clad in a new blue uniform arose and left the room. All eyes turned upon him; then Warwick continued:

"But to the sin of which I have been guilty, the wrong I have done. Last week, my brethren, in an hour of weakness, I turned to Cæsar for those things that did not concern Cæsar. I consulted a man of law, when I should have kneeled to God above, and in return my Lord did chasten me most sorely. I cannot alone bear the burden of my sin, and I ask help of you, my brethren."

Then he told how, in that recent interview, Judge Elford had charged him with being the di-

rect cause of his daughter's sorrow, and how the judge had also arraigned him for preaching "things most damnable."

"If that which I have taught be not according to the Word, I have sinned most deeply. If it be the truth, I have, none the less, sinned by reason of my momentary lack of faith. To you, my brethren, in this, the day of my distress, do I appeal for sympathy and for encouragement; help me to bear the burden the Lord in His far-seeing wisdom has elected as my part."

And that he got the needed consolation and encouragement was shown by the fact that, shortly afterward, in a more cheerful mood, he could have been seen riding toward his home. Back he went along the accustomed path made familiar to us on that memorable Sunday morning that witnessed the arrest of Warwick. Back to where Joshua had stopped, and, pointing to the thicket at the side of the path, had advised Lionel to slip off his horse and take the trail to the cave under the rock.

At this point sat a solitary horseman, the man who, dressed in blue, had abruptly left the church during the course of Warwick's pathetic remarks.

At the approach of the minister he drew his horse from the path, though not far enough back to permit the preacher to pass.

"Mr. Warwick," he said hesitatingly, "I would speak a word to you before I go to join my command; if—" He did not finish the sentence, but cast down his eyes.

"If what, Henry?"

"If you will take it kindly, if you will permit it."

"Why should I not take kindly what a young friend, a boy I have loved from childhood, has to say? Henry, I have taken great pride in your course. You have reflected great credit on yourself and us."

"For those words I thank you, Mr. Warwick; but I do not wish to speak of such matters, although what I have to say is for the most part personal. Mr. Warwick, you must not think of following Joshua, should he not return."

"But the honor of my house is at stake."

"Your friends will care for that. Even now arrangements are made by which, should Joshua fail, another young man will start North; and should he, too, fail, another and yet another. Trust to us, Mr. Warwick."

The minister reached out his hand and in silence shook that of his friend. Then he said:

"Henry, before friends step in no Warwick should be alive."

"It must not be, Mr. Warwick. You are a teacher of the Word. I am delegated to say to you that we, your friends, have taken on ourselves the punishment of this man. He cannot escape. And now, if you will permit me to say a personal word, I will make a statement which concerns myself only. Mr. Warwick, I may not return from the war."

"That is true, Henry. By war I have lost two boys."

"When I graduated from the University, as you know, I went next to teaching school. Ambition possessed me, hope for the future, but abruptly both were swept out and then I enlisted."

"I do not understand you."

"Mr. Warwick, before I leave for the front I must tell you that which to this moment has been locked in my bosom. I love your daughter Mary. From the time I first saw her in church until it was too late I loved her."

"You were a faithful attendant to services. I saw nothing of this love."

"Love of Mary drew me to church, Mr. Warwick, and, while I had never ventured to speak of this love, I lived to hope. Love of Mary led me to strive for higher attainments than otherwise I might have gained. Her face was ever before me. I studied night and day, I taught school, I saved my money, and finally was enabled to attend the University, where I graduated. Love of Mary led me to do this, and when the blow came this same love—for now there is no hope—led me to enlist in the cause I think just."

"The Lord willed it all."

"I am not through, Mr. Warwick. One year ago a party of our neighborhood young people rode past your home on their way for a day's frolic at Big Bone Springs. Mary, by the path near the foot of the hill, stood in a flood of sunlight, radiant, beautiful. I could not resist the temptation to ask her to accompany us. Riding to her side, I asked her if she could not join our party, promising to see her safely home."

"And she?"

"Replied that you, her father, did not approve of pleasure parties. And then I rode away; but, Mr. Warwick, teardrops sprang to her eyes, and

as we passed from sight I saw her stand with handkerchief pressed close to her face. It is all over now, but I believe that had she gone with us no evil thought could have come to her heart, and had she even sung aloud and romped and danced with us, the God you serve would not have taken vengeance on her for one day of pleasure, that one lightsome touch of gayety."

"Henry, the tale you tell me is twice, yes, thrice told already. These vanities of youth are but follies of the unthinking.

"How vain are all things here below,  
How false, and yet how fair!  
Each pleasure hath its poison, too;  
And every sweet a snare."

"My object, Mr. Warwick, is to say not only this I have told, but that, while Mary is lost to me forever, I still love with all my heart the memory of the girl who, Sabbath after Sabbath, a martyr, sat in church because her father willed it, and who with tears in her eyes stood in the path alone that bright day because her father willed it. Had I been permitted, Mr. Warwick, I should have

cared for her and protected her as one possessed of such love as I hold could and would have shown. And had I suspected the fate that was in store for Mary, who trusted unwisely the one who should have protected her with his life, so sure as God lives, Mr. Warwick, that which *is* would not have been.

“But let that pass. My object in telling that which I have told is to say that we, your neighbors, all believe in Mary. We, your friends and neighbors, feel that she is not guilty of a crime. Sorrow and shame too there may be, Mr. Warwick, but not guilt. We do not blame her for loving her father and being sacrificed to her father's will.”

He extended his hand, and then, as they separated, Warwick, ignoring the last remark, said:

“Henry, the government you serve will give you an old plug of a horse, that can neither credit you nor us, your friends. Come to the Knob tomorrow morning. Stonewall Jackson, the finest bit of flesh in Stringtown County, is yours, a present from me. I was holding him for son Samuel to ride in Morgan's command, but that hope is dead. It matters not to Stonewall whether he be

ridden by the blue or the gray, nor yet to me now, so that he carries a soldier worthy of the cause he fights for. ( Henry, the time is not as yet, but it will come, when men whose faces now confront each other because of principle will turn and together face the future, passing arm in arm, holding in kindly remembrance the faith that nerves them now to fight for the right, as to each seems the right. Then will they who cannot now perceive the justice of God's decrees know that His will is best. ) And, Henry, in case you fall, as fall you may, for Southern boys can shoot, rest assured that as long as Warwick is possessed of a crust your mother and your young sister shall not want. Be brave. Serve your country well, and remember, Henry, the father of two sons sacrificed in behalf of the Confederacy says with pride that Kentucky sends two armies to this war, and glories alike in both. Each must be to her an honor."

"Farewell, Mr. Warwick."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

“PAP, CAN’T YOU SEE THET I’M HOME AG’IN?”

Two months passed. In his home Warwick, the lonely old man of the Knobs, read his Bible as faithfully as he had done before his afflictions began; but, as usual, the larger share of each day was devoted to labor in the field. A solitary figure now he toiled, where a short time previously three boys had been in his company; but one only was now living, if, indeed, he yet lived, for no word came from Joshua.

When services were to be held in the island church, and then only, did Warwick leave home. His only rest was when sleep closed his eyes at night, unless the singing of a psalm or the morning, noon and evening prayer, or the study of the Word, might be called rest. The sun never rose before this man kneeled beside his bed and offered

up praises to God for His great goodness to man; never did a morsel of food pass his lips before thanks had been given the Giver of all blessings for His bountiful love and His no less just judgments on elected man, a sinner. And so passed the sixty days succeeding the departure of Joshua for the North. If Warwick thought at all of the lost son, he made no expression of the fact; if he were in the least concerned as to what the future might have in store for himself and others, he gave no external indication of the same, unless it might have been once when, the sixtieth day after Joshua left home, he laid his Bible carefully on the table and stepped to the fireplace, over the mantel of which was suspended the great bear gun that, long since changed from flint to percussion, was an heirloom from the past. Taking down the gun, he carefully inspected its various parts, wiped and cleaned the barrel, which had been so well oiled as to be free from rust, removed the lock and oiled its various parts, and finally examined the percussion tube to make sure it was open. When assured of its condition, he returned the gun to its place.

The redbud tree and the dogwood in the thick-

ets commingled their contrasting bloom when Joshua left; since that day young squirrels were more than half grown; robins had nested and reared their young; the woods were in mature leaf; blue grass was rank in the fence corners; planting time had passed and the day of thunder showers was again upon the land. A year had passed since the reader met Warwick for the first time, and this, the anniversary of our introduction, we find Warwick again in that same room reading his Bible. But it was a different daughter who now sat alone in the corner of the room.

That morning Warwick had not even started for the tobacco field, as was his custom. Instead, after breakfast was over, he had taken his Bible and, with hymn-book by his side, had alternately studied the Word and sang fragments of hymns, which, however, were so familiar as to render it unnecessary for him to refer to the book. Deep was the uncultivated voice of this man, rich in tone, full in volume; when Warwick sang, the Knobs about caught the echoes. He had just concluded a chapter of the Sacred Word, and then had raised his voice in the well-worn favorite:

“ ’Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live;  
’Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.”

At this point a familiar form appeared in the open door. It was Joshua. The father made no movement other than a sign of recognition. He raised his eyes from the volume, and then looked back at the page, intent on the lessons in the chapter. Mary sprang to her feet with a cry of joy. Then, as a flood of bitter emotions crushed upon her, the cry changed to a wail and she sank upon her knees beside the cradle.

With a glance at his father, Joshua turned to his sister. The overgrown youth, in two short months, had lost the stoop in his shoulders, and now stood fully an inch taller than when he left; seemingly he had changed from a rustic clown to a self-reliant man. Raising his sister in his arms, he pressed her to his breast. Her mother could have been no more tender than was big-hearted Joshua, as he gently stroked her hair and held her, and, as she raised her face from his shoulder, wiped the tears away. And when at last she stood

alone before him, strengthened by the kindly words and the hearty embrace, he stooped over and looked on the sleeping child and touched its little cheek with the tip of his rough finger.

Then, turning again to his father and standing before the austere man of God, no longer speaking as might a boy to a parent whom he feared, Joshua said:

“Pap, can’t you see thet I’m home ag’in?”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

“LET’S GO TO THE NEXT ROOM, PAP.”

WARWICK laid down his book and rose. Grasping Joshua’s hand, he gave it one of his relentless squeezes, such as made most men wince. But not Joshua. His hand had been cast in the Warwick mould, and his grasp had been seasoned and strengthened by a life of toil in the tobacco field in summer and by the axe in winter. Palm met palm, and coarse fingers closed about fingers not less coarse. The youth whose touch had just been so tender with his sister became now as aggressive and relentless as that of a traditional Warwick should be. He looked into the eyes of his father and gave back to him the grasp of a kinsman, gave it back with interest; for the first time had Warwick met his match. Warwick had met Warwick, and youth pre-

ailed. If Joshua had intended this to be a test of strength, he had shown his prowess.

“Pap,” said he, as he dropped the benumbed hand of his father, “can’t you see thet I’m home ag’in?”

“And feel it, too, Joshua, my son,” said Warwick, reseating himself, and pointing to an empty chair. But Joshua remained standing.

“Be seated, my son.”

“Pap, I’ve been a fool, and you’ve been a fool. We’re all fools, we of the South thet’s left livin’.”

“What do you mean, my son?”

“Pap, ef you’d done before the war what I’ve done sence, thar wouldn’t hev been two dead Warwick boys and a—” He looked at his sister, but said no more.

“What do you mean, Joshua?”

“I mean thet I’ve travelled, pap, and with my eyes open, too. I don’t blame you fer not havin’ travelled. You’re livin’ a thousand years behind the times and don’t know et. I blames the men we Southerners trusted, who did travel, and who came back and told us people who live in these hills, and others who live in the Southern swamps and the pine woods and the cotton fields and sugar

plantations brother said covers the South—I blames them, I say, fer tellin’ us we can whip the Yankees. Them’s the fellers I blames, pap, fer gettin’ us inter this devilish war.”

“Never mind the Yankees, Joshua. You did not go up North to look at Yankees.”

“Pap, we’re raw material yet. Ef them Yankees had our Gunpowder and Big Bone Springs, our buffalo hills and wallows, they’d sink wells to the bottom of ’em to see what’s down at their roots. Ef they had our Big Bone mire, they’d dig the muck over and sell a million dollars’ worth of ivory and mammoth bones fer colleges out of thet swamp. Ef they had these poplar timbers and these walnut knobs and trees, they’d build poplar furniture and skin et with slices of walnut knots and make a hundred fortunes. But we cuts these fine trees down and deadens these woods and burns ’em up and scrapes the yaller dirt fer a crop of terbacker, and in two years, when the soil washes down to the creek, we makes another deadenin’. We works all winter to clear a bit of ground to raise terbacker on the next summer, and in two years we hev to chop another patch out of the woods. We acts like we did when the Indians war here, pap.”



“Never mind how we act, Joshua. I say that you had an errand North. Tell me the result.”

“Pap, I went North fer one thing, and I found another. You don’t know nuthin’ about the North.”

“Tell me about what you went North to *do*.”

“Pap, thet country’s bigger’n what I thought the world is. I rode and rode till the ocean stopped me, and all along the sides of the track one town after another squatted. They war es thick es bees on a black sugar tree; there warn’t no countin’ the towns, and at the end of the trip, whar I run ag’in the ocean, ships stood in dozens and hunderds. Then I rode and rode ag’in, on one side the ocean and t’other side the land, and, Lord, pap, the houses, the towns, the ships I’ve seen. There warn’t no end to ’em. Then I turned ag’in and rode and rode, and looked and looked, and got tired of et all, fer wharever I went the towns spun along, and wharever we plumped ag’in the ocean the ships stood like wild ducks on a pond. Pap”—Joshua pointed to the Bible—“thet book of yourn is up in some ways, but when et comes to tellin’ ’bout what’s goin on in the world now, et’s a mighty long way behind the times.”

"Joshua, tell me of your trip."

"Thet's what I'm doin', pap. Every town I went through is full of Yankee soldiers, and every soldier has his nose p'inted toward the South. Thar's oodlins of 'em, pap. And every house has other men gittin' ready to be soldiers when them who are wearin' the blue are gone; and behind them are a crop of boys growin' up to be soldiers by the time these last are gone. Every ship thet comes from out thet ocean brings a load of Dutch and Irish, who git into the war, one way er 'nuther, by the time they touch the shore. We're fightin' all the world, I tell you, pap."

"But your own business North, Joshua. I care nothing for this."

"And then I travelled West, pap, and rode through miles and miles of land thet God Almighty cleared, land whar corn grows fer the askin' of et. No trees to cut down, no sidehills to wash into the creek, no bottom to the soil, no stones, no bones, no nuthin' to break a plough er dull an axe. Everywhar corn and wheat grows like weeds, oodlins of acres of corn and wheat, 'nough to feed them soldiers till their grandchildern what ain't cut their teeth yit grows up

to fight. Pap, what I wants to know is why our people who travelled North before the war didn’t tell us these things. We kin all be killed and leave a Yankee army bigger’n ours war at first. Why didn’t our men who travelled give us a fair show by tellin’ us we war fightin’ them slathers of men in the North, and the Almighty with His corn fields and oceans, and the Dutch and Irish thrown in? I tell you, pap, you might es well try to dam Gunpowder Creek with an armload of straw es to keep back thet army by fightin’ ’em with the men we kin raise in our woods and fields. The whole world can’t whip them people.”

Warwick was becoming impatient at Joshua’s evasive and provoking replies, but Joshua seemed determined to escape, or at least delay the issue.

“I tell you that these things do not concern me. You started North not to study corn and wheat and ships and oceans—”

“And then the factories, pap,” interrupted Joshua. “I walked and walked in one city and then in another and another whar the mills war built up ag’inst the sky and hadn’t no bottom ner no end to ’em. Girls and boys and women war in them mills, makin’ shoes by the carload and blue

garments by the shipful. Hunderds of mills, some of 'em with a dozen chimbls, each chimblly bigger'n a yaller poplar tree, and some of them mills with trains of cars running clear through 'em. In they go at one end loaded with logs and iron, and out they come at t'other end loaded with guns. I saw 'em run barrels of flour into one side of some of them mills, and boxes of crackers war dumped out of t'other side; droves of hogs walk into the back door of them slaughter-houses, and yaller hams and cured side meat are carted out the front. The hogs and flour jest turn to meat and bread while they pass along; the shoes and uniforms and guns and sech jest tumble out by the trainful; and men fer soldiers jest spring up everywhar like grasshoppers. I say, pap, what's the use of us tryin' to fight sech people?"

"The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong," said Warwick, turning now to his refuge, the Scriptures.

"Pap," and Joshua pointed to the Book, "them people North don't take no stock in thet Book. I didn't see no man with a Bible in his hand sence I've been gone. Ef they have any Bibles, they keep 'em in the cellar er in their iron safes, I

reckon. I didn’t see no man singin’ psalms, and I didn’t hear no man talk ’bout the Lord. Ef they trusts the Lord, outside the writin’ on their money, them Yankees does et on the quiet. Some of ’em, mostly women, slips into their churches on Sunday and sits awhile on cushioned seats, and then comes out and shets the house up fer a week. I didn’t see no Northern man carry a Bible in, ner no man take a Bible out of meetin’, and while I heard a power of cussin’ on the streets, I never heard no Bible talk. I tells you, pap, thet Book of yourn don’t mean business North, and the Lord don’t seem to lay et up ag’in the people who cusses and swears, no more’n He helps sech folks as you, who prays and sings psalms and sits with the Book on yer lap.”

“Joshua, this is sacrilege. ‘He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,’ says the Word.”

“I tells you, pap, the Lord seems to be mighty kind to His one-day people and devilish tough on his seven-day man.”

“Tell me of the rock-hunter, sir. I demand it.” Warwick’s eye flashed; the final word of his son was more than he could bear.

"Pap, can't you see thet I don't want to talk?" said the boy, glancing at his sister.

"But you must talk, Joshua."

"The Lord knows, pap, thet I didn't come home till the last day of the two months. I've wandered everywhar and back ag'in, puttin' the day off. The Lord knows, too, thet I've tried to keep my tongue off the rock-hunter sence I got home. Let's go into the next room, pap."

## CHAPTER XXV.

“SISTER, THESE THINGS WHAT’S COMIN’ ARE FER MEN TO HEAR.”

MARY, who had been kneeling by the side of the rude cradle with eyes fixed on her brother, had intently listened to every word that passed between her father and brother. She now slipped before the door that led to the next room, and stood in the open way, looking steadily at the men, who but for Joshua’s last remark seemed to have forgotten her presence. Joshua’s manner, as his eyes met those of his sister, changed instantly.

“Sister, these things what’s comin’ are fer men to hear.”

“But you speak now of *him*, Joshua. I am his wife.”

The lad trembled. Tears came to his eyes and he became again the bowed-shouldered boy who left the Knob two months before. Hastily brush-

ing his eyes with his coat-sleeve, he turned to his father.

"Pap, you remembers once you said thet no more disgrace could come to the name of Warwick? You forces me to say it, pap; I've gone and awfully disgraced the name you give me."

The father arose. He placed a hand on each shoulder of his son, exactly as, two months before, in that same room he had done with the rebel soldier who told his pathetic story.

"Speak again, Joshua, my son, my last son."

"Sit down, pap. You forces me to tell it, you and sister, but the Lord knows I've tried to keep et back. Sit down, sister." He placed a chair for the girl.

"Pap," said Joshua, pointing to the bear gun, "ef you'd go North with thet gun on yer shoulder and thet Bible under yer arm, them Yankees would guy the beard off yer face. They'd put you in a cage and show you to their children as the wild man jest out of the Gunpowder Hills. But thet ain't what I'm after sayin' now. When I left the Knob, I struck through Stringtown fer the North. I thought thet I'd jest got to go back of the river to find the rock-hunter and shoot a



hole through him and then come home—thet is, ef I didn't git shot myself. But Lord, pap, I rode on the cars a day and a night and another day before I come to his town. And when I got off the cars, I felt es green es a gourd, fer things war not like they are here. I walked 'bout the streets a bit, and then hunted fer a tavern to git my dinner.”

Joshua turned to his sister. “Sis, won't so much talk wake the baby up? Hadn't you better go into the next room?”

The girl shook her head and gazed silently at her discomfited brother.

“It's es fair fer one es fer another, I guess,” he said. “I made sister talk a heap in this room, and now I'm being paid back.”

Joshua turned abruptly upon his father. “Did you preach the mercy text, pap?”

“I did not preach ‘the way of the transgressor——’ ”

“I didn't ask you what you didn't preach,” interrupted Joshua, turning to his sister.

“Sis, you begged me to give the rock-hunter a chance. I couldn't git them words out of my ears. You stood on the Knob by the side of the old house es I left home, and when I got North I

couldn't shet my eyes to the picture you made ag'in the sky. Thet's the beginnin' of the shamin' of me, pap. I couldn't hear nuthin' but sister's last words. I couldn't see nuthin' but sister's face. Pap, you remembers the dream of sister. You remembers, too, thet when sister come back and told how the rock-hunter lied to her, you said thet no more sorrer could come to you, thet the end war there?" His father made no reply.

"Pap, I says thet I've disgraced the name of Warwick more than sister ever did, fer she believed in the man she loved. I knew what I did when I did et. Can't you let me go off now? I don't want to talk."

The voice of the old man trembled. "Your story, Joshua. This is no time for trifling."

"After I got my dinner thet day in the town up North whar the rock-hunter lives, I asked ef anybody could tell me whar his home war. I showed the card he give me in the terbacker patch, and the man said the rock-hunter's daddy war the richest man in town. Said he, 'The big factory's his'n, and half the men and women and girls in the town work fer him and live on him. He owns 'em all.'

“ ‘I don’t keer fer that,” I answered back. ‘I don’t intend to work fer him, ner live on him, and he don’t own me ner never will. What I wants to know is whar he lives.’ And the man told me.

“Pap, you ought to see thet house and them grounds. Lord, but our log cabins are mighty little. The front yard is like a checker-board of flower-beds and sech like. There are stone walks, stone people and stone water-spouts; big-leaved plants and funny bushes, and in the pond I passed was red and white and yaller fish of the colour of frosted leaves. The front steps are made of tombstone marble, pap. They are white es snow, and I hated to walk on ’em, but thar warn’t no other way of gittin’ to the door, so I tiptoed up and knocked. Somehow, I didn’t like to step on thet tombstone stuff jest then, fer I knowed what I come North fer meant business to the tombstone man. I had to knock three times before the door war opened; and when I war let in the hall and showed thet card the man answered thet the rock-hunter war away, but thet his mother war home, and before I knew et—fer I felt awful awkward—I war taken to another room, whar she sot with a little girl by her side. Sister,” Joshua said, turn-

ing again to the girl, "won't this talk make yer head ache?" But she made no reply, only kept her eyes steadily on her brother.

"I jest stood in the room, holdin' my hat in my hand, raw material, pap, without sense 'nough to say a word, and I stood until she got up and asked in a kind way what she could do fer me. 'Nuthin' thet I knows of,' I answered. 'I come to see *him*.' And then I handed her the card.

" 'My son Lionel?'

" 'Yes'm.'

" 'He is in college. Who shall I tell him called?' she said in a way thet showed she war curious consarnin' me, and I guess she had reason to be, judgin' from my looks and manner.

" 'I'm Joshua Warwick, mam, from Kaintuck, and my business is with this boy.' Hadn't you better go out of the room, sister," abruptly asked the speaker.

Again the girl shook her head, while Joshua continued:

"The lady came to me with her hand held out, jest like we do here. She shook my fingers, fer she couldn't half reach round my hand, and then she passed my hat to the waiter. Then she set a

chair fer me herself, jest es polite es ef she had been one of us and me one of 'em.

“ ‘Come here, Mary,’ she said to the little girl. ‘This is your brother’s friend from Kentucky.’ The little one come and shook hands and then stood lookin’ at me, and I felt like a fool, pap. But et didn’t last long, fer the woman talked a streak, and I’ll tell what she said es best I can.

“ ‘Lionel wrote about you all. He told us of your father, the Baptist minister. I hope he is well?’

“ ‘Yes’m.’

“ ‘He told us of your country, your hills, your Big Bone springs, your creeks, and oh, so many things strange to us people of the North.’

“ ‘Yes’m.’

“ ‘He told us of you, Joshua, of your wonderful strength, of your dialect, of your love for the South, and he said that he could now understand how you could all be rebels and be patriotic, too. He told us of your many sacrifices.’

“ ‘Yes’m.’

“ ‘She talked a blue streak, pap, and when she stopped fer breath I asked :

“ ‘An’ didn’t he say nothin’ about no Warwicks but pap and me?’ ”

The sister of Joshua now came forward, and with face uplifted gazed into her brother's eyes.

"She looked at me mighty funny-like and answered: 'Only your father and you, Joshua, and your two brothers in the Confederate army.' "

A smothered cry came now from the sister, who sank into a chair. But Joshua continued:

" 'They've both been killed, mam. Didn't he say nuthin' 'bout no other Warwick?'

" 'Is there another?'

"Her manner changed, pap. She seemed startled and looked like a guinea chicken in the grass with its head up.

" 'Yes'm, a sister, mam, a girl of the same name as the little one here. Didn't he say nuthin' 'bout *our* Mary?'

"She shook her head and asked: 'Have you a Mary, too?'

" 'Yes'm, and thet's what I came from Kaintuck to see 'bout.' Lord, pap, but the woman turned white and then said: 'You came to see Lionel about your sister Mary?'

"She read in my eyes thet I meant business, I guess, and then she began to tremble and drew her little one to her side, reminding me of a mother hen, what sees the shadder of a hawk.

“ ‘Yes’m, but I didn’t come to see his *mother*, mam,’ and I turned fer my hat. ‘You’ll excuse me, mam, fer havin’ talked at random. You see, I can’t think quick, and sometimes my tongue runs away. I’ve said too much now, mam, and I hopes you’ll fergit et. I’m powerful sorry, mam, but I’m raw material and don’t mean no harm——’

“ ‘You must not go without telling me about your sister. What had Lionel to do with her? What brought you so far to see my son about your sister? I must know——’

“Pap, I saw thet poor mother’s face, jest like I *felt* sister’s. They mixed themselves together. I saw her draw thet little girl close to her side, es ef she loved her like I loves sister.

“ ‘Thar’s devilment enough done to us Warwicks already,’ I said to myself, ‘and more to come. This mother’s going to git an awful slice, too, and I’ll not hurry her share of et.’ Et war a cowardly thing fer a Warwick to do, but I lost my grip, pap. Them two faces was too much fer me.

“ ‘Mam,’ I said, ‘I didn’t come to see *you*. I war travellin’ a bit, and jest stopped off to see

*him*' (I held the card out), 'and I didn't mean to speak a word to you 'bout sister, ner nuthin'. I've been a fool fer sayin' what I done.'

" 'Your sister, Joshua, what about your sister and Lionel?' she asked, not paying any attention to what I had said. 'What about your sister?'

" 'Nuthin', mam, only thet when your son was at our house he met Sister Mary and she grew to think a power of him. She's a girl, mam, and mus'ent be blamed. Et's jest to tell him thet after he left the Knob sister got married, mam. Thet's what brings me to stop off here, thet's all, mam.' "



## CHAPTER XXVI.

“PAP, THE LAST WARWICK OF THE KNOBS IS A  
COWARD.”

“THEN I left the home of the rock-hunter, pap, and started on the hunt of him. Et don't consarn us now es to how I found the place. Talk about yer schools. I never would hev guessed sech a place war a school. There war fine walks, fine drives, fine houses, and grass, and trees, and flowers, and sech. Thar war brass and tombstone figgers of men and women, some of 'em dressed and some not half dressed. Them Yankees hev a powerful likin' fer sech things. There war ponds and water spouts and the Lord knows what not. It war like lookin' fer a needle in a haystack to look fer the rock-hunter in thet crowd. Ef thar war one, thar war a thousand fellers, grown men, pap, not boys, goin' to them schools in them big houses. Et war a flock of schools. I didn't say

nuthin' and didn't ask no questions, but stood 'round and watched, playin' thet I war lookin' at the tombstone figgers and sech, but keepin' my eye on whoever came in sight. I knowed ef thet rock-hunter war goin' to thet school, he would hev to pass my way some mornin', and he did. I cotch a glimpse of him first, fer I kept my eyes skinned and he warn't expectin' me. I ducked my head and put a tree 'twixt us quick, and when he passed I took after him keerless like. He didn't see me, but I kept my eye on him. Next he went in one of them big school-houses and I waited outside, killin' time one way and 'nuther.

"Pap," said Joshua, abruptly changing the subject, "thar's a man up North who looks jest like Judge Elford—the same face, the same white whiskers, the same sliding walk, the same everything. Ef I hadn't known the judge war in Stringtown, I'd hev been sure et war him. I saw him twice while I war slippin' around.

"When thet school let out, the rock-hunter went to another school, and then another, me follerin' him. Lord, pap, but a feller what learns all thet them big schools teaches must know a power of book stuff. But ef book stuff makes sech mean

fellers es rock-hunter, I'd rather be raw material. Long 'bout dinner time he come out and started off, me trackin' of him. You bet, pap, I kept my eye on thet feller and I never let up till he got whar he lived. I'm a gump, pap, but not green 'nough to tackle a feller like the rock-hunter in daylight in his own livin' place. I jest laid low and studied the ground, not countin' the days, fer I didn't care fer the days. They ain't worth countin' in sech a case es this. I found out his feedin' times and his comin' and goin' times, fer after trackin' him all the way from Kaintuck, there mus'ent be no flash in the pan. 'Joshua, the time's mighty close when you've got to make a spoon er spile a horn,' I said to myself. One night he went out, and I watched the door till he come back, and when he went in the house I pulled the side knob and waited. When the door-waiter come, I said that I wanted to see the rock-hunter, giving the door-waiter his name. 'Jest show me up, I said; I'm from home.' I knocked on the door, and es et opened I jest stepped inside and shet et quick. Then I turned the key, and then I turned round and looked down on him, who hedn't hed a chance to see my face. He saw it then, pap.

"Not a word did I say, but stood lookin' down in his face, and he a-shiverin'. I didn't intend to speak first. It did me good to see him shiver. Lord, pap, but he warn't proud then. I'd hev liked fer some of them factory fellers he owns to hev seen their master shiver.

" 'Thet you, Joshua?' he said, after a bit, tremblin' like.

" 'Didn't you ask me to come and see you ef I ever got North?' And I shoved the card he gave me in the terbacker patch into his face. He kept a-shiverin' and got whiter. Lord, pap, he looked skeered.

" 'Thet you, Joshua?' he said ag'in, fool-like.

" 'Yes, and I hain't got my hair cut, neither. Warn't you lookin' fer me er pap er some one from our section?' I asked, kinder keerless like fer one who felt es hateful es I did then.

" 'Keep yer hand off thet rope,' I said, es I saw him git up and edge toward the bell cord.

" 'What kin I do fer you, Joshua?' he asked after a bit, and then I pinto back to the cheer.

" 'Set down, rock-hunter, while I ask a question.'

"He settled into the cheer monstrous limber-like, and then I asked :

“ ‘Didn’t we treat you fair, we who live down in the Knobs?’

“He didn’t answer.

“ ‘Ain’t et a square question, rock-hunter? Didn’t we treat you fair?’

“ ‘Yes,’ he said.

“ ‘Rock-hunter, I don’t intend to spend no words, but I wants you to listen to my story and see ef I tells et on the square. We who live down in the Knobs hev our own way of settlin’ accounts, but we want to be fair. Jest listen while I talk, and ef I speak a crooked word, hold up yer hand, fer et’s come to be a life matter, and I don’t want to go home feelin’ thet I did you bad or didn’t give you a show. Now, keep your ears open.

“ ‘We lived in the Knob country, pap, sister and us three boys. We lived well, fer we had all we wanted, but I knows now et warn’t much, when I see how you folks live. But ef any people war happier than we war onct, the Lord did mighty well by ’em. Then this devilish war broke into Stringtown County, and some of us people went North to fight and others South to fight. But we couldn’t all go to war, and I had to stay home to

help pap. Them war bad days, rock-hunter, but not half es bad as the day thet brought you.' I stopped talkin' fer a bit, to give him a show, but he didn't say nuthin'.

" 'Then Brother Samuel war shot, and next Brother Ezra; but we don't count sech things bad by the side of what you done. Am I talkin' straight, rock-hunter? Hold up yer hand ef I git crooked?' He didn't say nuthin', but jest shivered, and I went on:

" 'Then sister come home and told her story, and I started North next mornin' and went straight to yer home. I saw the place where you live. Lord, but you've got lots of things. I saw yer mother and yer sister, too. You've everything you want, rock-hunter—fine clothes, fine horses, fine house, fine garden and lot. You've got a rich pap and a sister Mary and a mammy thet loves you jest like es if you all war common people. It war a mighty chance you hed to be good and make folks happy. Lord, ef I'd only had sech a chance! We Warwicks down in the Knobs hedn't nuthin' much but sister, and she a timid, trustin' bit of a girl. Jest this little one lamb of a girl war all we had, rock-hunter, after brothers went to war,

’ceptin’ trouble and sorrer ’nough, because of the war, to drive any man but pap crazy. And then you come and sister trusted you.’

“I stopped sudden-like and he looked up.

“ ‘Why didn’t you kill her, rock-hunter? Why didn’t you choke her life out in thet hotel whar you left her, and then slip off to yer fine home and yer mother and sister? Thet’s what sech high-bred cusses es you are fit fer. Why didn’t you choke her life out first and skip off next? It would hev been easier on sister and not half es bad on pap and me.’

“Pap, I war gittin’ fired up. I wouldn’t hev give a copper cent fer that feller’s hide ef he hed raised a hand then, but he didn’t. ‘Am I talkin’ straight?’ I asked, but he kept still.

“Sister”—Joshua turned to the girl—“jest es I war ready to stick the sneak, I thought of my promise to you. ‘Rock-hunter,’ I said, ‘let all them things pass. Sister’s home ag’in, home in the old house on the Knobs, and thet’s what I’m here fer. I told her thet when I found you I would say, ‘Sister’s waitin’ fer you to come back.’ Rock-hunter, won’t you go back to sister?”

“I spoke mighty soft then, fer I wanted to give

him a fair show, but I felt awful devilish, pap. He shook his head. I guess my beggin' question made him think I was afeard, fer he got pert all of a sudden and brightened up.

" 'Rock-hunter, what you did to us, who took you into our home, is too mean fer any man to do and live after; but killin' you now won't save the name of Warwick, and thet's what comes first. Rock-hunter, won't you go back to sister and show our people thet she is a good girl?' He didn't say yes, sister. Then I tried another move.

" 'We thinks a heap of our old home down in Kaintuck, but the honour of the Warwicks, livin' and dead, is worth more than land and horses and terbacker. Now, I'll make an offer, rock-hunter, and it's powerful hard fer me to talk about doin' et, too. I don't ask nuthin' bad er wrong, neither. Jest be fair, rock-hunter, to us, who've been fair to you. Pap'll make you a deed to the farm, and him and me'll give you all we've got ef you'll come back and save sister. Then pap and me'll go off from the old place ferever.'

" 'I can't think of it, Joshua,' he said, very pert-like. I guess, sister, he thought thet I'd got afeared.



“Then I took out the flower you sent him. ‘Rock-hunter, sister handed me this little blue flower when I started North. She said, es near es I kin recollect: “Tell *him* I picked this violet from where we sat together beside the lilac bush in the front yard of the old home on the Knob. Tell him I love him yet and will forgive all ef he will come back to me and show my people that he’s my husband.” ’ ’ ’ Joshua stopped.

“Sister, I wish you’d go into the next room.” But the white-faced girl shook her head.

“Pap, this is whar the disgrace comes in, the shame thet struck the last Warwick of the Knob. When I spoke of sister, and thought of her beggin’ fer the rock-hunter’s life, the grit in me begun to slip away. I saw sister’s white face, like es she was in the room the day I left, like es it is now. I heard her last words beggin’ of me not to kill her husband. Then *his* mother and thet little sister of his’n come, too, and them faces all mixed together and——. Kin you stand et, pap?”

“Stand what, Joshua?”

“The shame, pap, the shame thet’s come to you and sister, to Brother Ezra and Samuel what’s dead—the disgrace I’ve brought home from the North.”

"Speak, my son."

"Pap, you onct said thet no more sorrer, no more shame could come to the name of Warwick." The youth hesitated, then spoke slowly, pathetically.

"Pap, them women's faces kept lookin' at me; they stood out before thet of the rock-hunter. I couldn't stick a knife into him without cuttin' them through; I couldn't shoot him without the ball went into sister. I've got to say et, pap, the last Warwick of the Knob's a coward." The boy covered his face with his hands and shrank away from where his father stood.

"A coward by the name of Warwick," the voice of the old man trembled as he spoke. "Joshua, a coward by the name of Warwick has no right to live." He seized the unresisting youth by the collar and gazed into his eyes. The grasp was like a vise; the garment cut deep into the neck.

"Could you not have jumped from the train and struck your head against a bridge pier, sir?"

The youth cast down his eyes.

"Could you not have thrown yourself into the ocean you have told about, and there have drowned the word coward from out your ears?"

No reply.

“Where was the pistol, the weapon you handled so freely when last we sat in this room? Could you not have saved the name of Warwick the disgrace of cowardice? Had you no thought of the line of brave men behind you; of the soldier brothers who died in behalf of the Confederacy; of your disconsolate sister, who, God knows, has enough to bear without a brother’s added shame; of your father, the old man on the Kentucky Knob, *the last Warwick of the Knob?* For if the name coward rests on you, sir, it shall not stain the name and besmirch the blood of Warwick.” The intensely earnest man pointed to the door and gave the unresisting youth a shove that sent him spinning.

“Out of the house of Warwick!”

But the boy stepped back and with downcast face replied:

“When I’m through with the story, pap, the story that I come back from the North to tell, I’ll go away ferever, and you and sister kin fergit my name.” Then he continued:

“The rock-hunter got up and took a book and

wrote out a cheque, while I stood lookin' at him, wondering what he war up to.

“ ‘Take this, Joshua, and go back to the Knob, and forget all these things. Live——’

“He didn't say no more, pap, fer I grabbed him by the ears and squeezed his head till his eyes bulged out.

“ ‘You devilish sneak, you black-hearted imp, do you think there's money enough in the North to buy a Warwick's shame? Ef you say one word more, I'll wring yer neck twice round, er git back of them faces and stick a knife through yer ribs from behind and out yer front. Burn thet paper, you skunk, burn it quick.' Lord, but I was mad. ‘Rock-hunter,’ I said, ‘ef the faces of sister and your mother fades out of my sight, thet's the last of you.’ Pap, it war all I could do to keep my hand off the knife down the back of my neck, and ef I hadn't stuck my revolver into my pocket muzzle up, I'd hev bored him sure, fer I war fingerin' the place the handle should hev been.

“ ‘Don't you say no more words like them, rock-hunter. Et'll be sartain death ef you tries et on.' He quivered like Big Bone mire when you shakes et with yer foot, pap.”

Joshua turned quickly to his sister. “Sis, I didn’t want you to hear the end of my story, and I tried to git you away. You hev sorrer ’nough to stand of yer own, without listenin’ to yer brother’s disgrace. The faces I’ve told you ’bout kept in my head. I saw ’em in the air; I heard the voices of thet feller’s little sister and mother and of you, too, sister. I wanted to run a knife through him, I wanted to shoot him full of holes, to choke the life out of him, but them innercent faces kept before me. Jest like milk turns of a sudden to clabber, I hed turned to a coward. It war an awful disgrace to the name of Warwick, but I couldn’t shoot through you, sister, to hit him.

“Pap, everything thet’s spoke er sounded sence thet night has cried coward at me. The locomotive thet brought me home puffed *cow-ard*; the bells rang *cow-ard*; the Yankees all looked *cow-ard* at me. Everything and everybody looked et er said et. And when I struck Kaintuck, the crows cawed *cow-ard*; the birds sang *cow-ard*; the buzzard sailed around and looked down, es ef he’d never seen a coward before. The horses’ feet played the word *cow-ard* on the pike; the cow in the paster looked through the fence and blinked

her eyes and then raised her head and moo-ed *coward*. And when I got to the foot of the hill one old bull-frog, settin' in the edge of Gunpowder, raised his head and croaked *cow-ard*. Pap, thet's how et feels to be a coward. Everything and everybody knows et, but I stood up straight and faced 'em all till I met you, pap, and stood up then, too, fer a bit. But the time's comin' when no feller'll say coward when he speaks to er 'bout Joshua Warwick."

The tone of his voice was sad; his bowed head told of his anguish of spirit. Family tradition, as well as education, had from infancy taught him that there could be no greater disgrace than that of cowardice. He held out his arms pathetically toward the sister whose wrongs he had failed to avenge.

"I couldn't help et, sister, I'd turned coward, but I'm not afeard of any man livin'. Et wasn't because I'm afeard of gittin' shot er cut er hurt, sister, thet I disgraced the name of Warwick." Then to his father, who stood gazing at him with face as stern as if it were carved out of stone:

"Pap, I did my best to be a man. I took my pistol out of my pocket. 'Shoot me, rock-hunter,

shoot me quick, fer I hain't a right to live.' But he jest set still a-shiverin'. It warn't no use, pap. I couldn't git them faces out of my way, and he hedn't no grit. I'm a coward. The last Warwick of the Knob's a coward, pap."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"FORM, AND VOICE AND KNOB WERE GONE."

WARWICK raised his hand and pointed to the door.

"Go."

Joshua turned toward the door, then stopped as if to speak again, at which the old man repeated the word and added:

"The end has come, the end of the name of Warwick of the Knobs. Go."

"I'm goin', pap. I come back to say et warn't no use fer you to start North and be made fun of by them Yankees. I couldn't bear to see you made fun of. I didn't want to tell this story, but you made me do et, pap. I'm goin', but first I wants to look over the old place, to see the hills and knobs and creeks ag'in. I wants ter see the



terbacker patch, the cliffs, the pigs and cattle and horses and sech. I wants to see the grave whar mother lies. I wants to see the row of Warwicks in the old graveyard.”

“Where you can never lie.”

“Thet’s true, pap. Sech as me has no right in thet row.”

He turned to the door. Warwick cast his eyes upon his book. Mary kneeled down beside the cradle and buried her face in the coverlet. Joshua crossed the room and took his sister in his arms.

“Sister, it’s an awful shame I’ve brought on you all, but soon I’ll be gone, and then you and pap kin fergit the name of Joshua.” The girl, sobbing, clung to him, but he gently unclasped her arms.

“Pap, I’m goin’ now to the old graveyard whar mother lies and say good-by, and then off to the war and git shot. I’ll join General Morgan, er git killed tryin’. And ef I find Morgan, et won’t take me long to git killed, fer whar Morgan is the bullets fly thick enough not to miss me.”

Mary took from her neck a bit of silk, a miniature flag bearing two red bars. The youth laid it in his clumsy hand.

"Brother Ezra's flag, Mary, the flag you gave him when he left fer the South?"

"Yes, Joshua."

"Ef I ever bring this flag back, sister, I'll hold my head up. No feller'll say 'Coward' then. Ef I don't bring it—" The boy stopped, then continued, holding the bit of silk bearing the two red stripes so that the white bar could be seen. "Ef I don't bring it, there'll be no white stripe left." Then he turned to his father.

"Pap, it's a long way to the South. Mayn't I have Stonewall?"

"Stonewall is now ridden by a brave Union soldier. I gave the horse to teacher Henry, who has enlisted in the Northern army."

"Stonewall gone to the Yankee army? Brother Ezra's horse?"

Just then the sound of a wagon on the creek-road broke upon the ear. Then came the ring of merry voices, a picnic party going to Big Bone Springs for a frolic.

Joshua pointed toward the party. "Pap, may I ask a question on the square?"

"Go on, sir."

“Ef you hed let sister go with them young folks a year ago, do you think she would be cryin’ all alone beside a cradle now? Wouldn’t it hev been better fer her to dance and sing, pap, than to hev this sorrer? What harm would et hev done the Lord, pap? If you hed listened to sister’s dream, thet come out of nuthin’, es you say, would Brother Samuel hev been shot, would the rock-hunter hev hed a chance to make the trouble he done, would I be a coward?”

“The Lord willed it all.”

“Pap, the Lord hes willed a power of devilmint to us Warwicks thet I don’t see the good of.”

“Neither can I, nor do I try; but I, sir, call it righteous affliction. Somewhere in God’s all-wise handiwork comes a place for these trials. I, who see not into the future, nor the lesson of our lives, cannot say how God can make use of the afflictions He sends us to bear. Were it not so, infinite wisdom would not have planned this chain of sorrow and shame. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

“Good-by, pap.” Joshua held out his hand. “We’ll never meet ag’in, fer I’ll git killed in the

war, and thar ain't no chance fer *me* to meet you in heaven. It's a monstrous hard and bitter life I've led, pap, and it's tough to be damned ferever and ferever after it's gone, but I've got to stand et."

He folded his sister in his arms. "We'll meet ag'in, sister, you and me, in the awful place God's sendin' us to." Bending down, Joshua touched the baby's cheek with his finger and turned to the door, passing down the road toward the creek at the base of the Knobs. To his ears came the voice of his father, the last Warwick of the Knobs. Full and strong, without a tremor, its volume filled the valley and echoed from the surrounding heights:

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it,  
Seal it from Thy courts above."

For a last farewell the youth raised now his face to the home of his childhood. The form of his sister was yet to be seen in the doorway; she

leaned against the casing, her face buried in her handkerchief.

Then Joshua passed behind the honey locust-tree, and form, and voice, and Knob were gone.

THE END.

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